

THE SCHOOL DROPOUT RETENTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 1987

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET UNITED STATES SENATE ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

MIAMI, FL

SEPTEMBER 2, 1987



Printed for the use of the Committee on the Budget

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

77-847

WASHINGTON : 1987

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

5251-12

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1987

U.S. SENATE,
SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE,
Miami, FL.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9 a.m., in the Dade County School Board Auditorium, 1450 Northeast 2nd Avenue, Miami, FL, Hon. Lawton Chiles (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senator Chiles.

Staff present: Kim N. Wallace, analyst for education, training, employment and social services, and Carla Lunetta, legislative assistant on education.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN CHILES

Chairman CHILES. Good morning. We welcome everybody to our hearing, and we certainly want to acknowledge Superintendent Joseph Fernandez and to thank him for providing us with the auditorium here at the School Board's building.

We thank him for the use of this facility. Dave Arnett and Tom Cerra have been very helpful to us in working with our staff to put this together, we know that a number of other people have worked as well, and we thank them all.

As a native Floridian, and as a Senator, I have always been proud of our State.

Florida is a national leader in many areas—in high technology, in citrus production and in tourism, just to name a few. But there is one field where we are a national leader that we are not so proud of—and that is the level of high school dropouts.

EDUCATION KEY TO SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

It has been said that education is an investment in the future. I think the statistics bear that out. High school graduates generally have an easier time in finding the good jobs. They usually earn more money than dropouts. They are certainly less likely to be poor.

Yet, in spite of the statistics, it seems that many of our young people do not believe in investing in education.

DROPOUT RATE ALARMINGLY HIGH

Consider these statistics: during the 1985-1986 school year over 40,000 of Florida's young people have dropped out of school.

Our graduation rate for 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Education, was 61.2 percent, which means that only six out of 10 Florida students earned a high school diploma.

For 1984, Florida's graduation rate was 62.2 percent. That is a 1 percent difference, and it may not seem like a lot, but, if it continues, our dropout rate will reach 50 percent within 10 years from now.

In comparison to other states, Florida ranks 49th—only exceeded by the State of Louisiana and the District of Columbia.

For minorities, the picture is even more dismal. One recent study in Dade County estimated that the graduation rate for black youths in 1985 was 44.1 percent. For Hispanic youths, it was 46.8 percent.

Why are our young people dropping out of school?

I do not know the answer to that question. I do not think there is one answer, and that is one reason I am here today.

Research tells us that there are a number of causes for the dropout problem.

We are going to hear today from some of the experts in the field—the individuals who have worked closely with students and dropouts, those who have felt the impact of dropouts on the economy and in the community, and from students and dropouts.

I want to hear from you why our young people are leaving school. I want to hear how the dropout problem affects your particular area of expertise, whether it be law enforcement, the family, or business. But most of all, I want to listen. I want to find out what we can do to make dropouts listen. How can we reach them?

How can we get across to troubled young people that they may not find all the answers in the classroom, but that they sure won't find them in the streets? How can we persuade students that education is an investment in the future?

There are a number of local dropout programs that we have been contacted about since our hearings were announced, and we wish that we had time to learn about all of those programs. In fact, I have already decided that we are going to come back and hold some kind of a forum in which we are going to ask for—and get—more information about those programs.

JOINT EFFORT NEEDED TO ENCOURAGE EDUCATION

Again, I think that—as much as anything—today and this week we are starting the process of making people in our state aware of the tremendous problem that we have, and it is a problem that we are not going to solve in Washington or in Tallahassee, or, really, at the School Board in Dade County. We are going to have to have family involvement and community involvement, church involvement, and the whole society. We are going to have to come to grips with this, but I also think we are going to have to convince some people that there are some things that government can do, and that there are some dollars that we should be spending and that those dollars will be a lot cheaper if we spend them during the early stages of a child's development.

POOR SCHOLASTIC ATTITUDES COST BILLIONS

Consider how much it costs to teach the thousands of children that we have repeating grades because they do not pass. Think again of the costs associated to dropouts: anything from incarceration to welfare benefit payments to the loss of ungenerated tax revenues.

We have a study that estimates the loss to be \$75 billion a year. So, hopefully, today—as I said—we are going to hear from some of the people who are on the front line, and they will tell us what the costs are and what the problems are, then we hope to start working on what we can do to get the answers.

FEDS CONCERNED ABOUT DROPOUTS

At the federal level I have introduced a bill—the School Dropout Retention and Reentry Act of 1987—that would provide \$50 million over a 3 year period to state and local governments for grants to experiment with innovative programs; to compile pertinent information and knowledge so that we can find out which dropout prevention programs are working. If we find a successful model in another state that is working, my bill would enable us to transmit that model elsewhere in an efficient way at low-cost to everyone. I am as serious about education and as concerned about the dropout problem as I am about the future of this country. I think those go exactly hand in hand, because, if we do not deal with the dropout problem, then we are not dealing with the future of this country.

We find ourselves engaged in an international arena now. We compete with the Japanese, and their dropout rate is less than 5 percent; they are graduating over 95 percent. We cannot successfully compete with Japan or other advanced nations until we reduce this country's dropout rate.

With that, we will get on with the hearing, and I hope that a lot of young people will be listening, and I hope that we will be able to find a way to lower those dropout statistics and certainly be proud of that achievement.

I want to thank in advance our young people we are going to have on the panel for coming in.

I know that it is not easy to come up here and talk about some of your problems, but it is very helpful to us that you are agreeing to do that, and we certainly do want to thank you.

For the sake of time, we are going to have to try to keep our hearing moving, so we will be trying to get people to hold their initial remarks to around 7 minutes so that we will have time to answer questions and to hear from all of our particular panels.

Our first panel will be dealing with the scope of the problem and recent research, Tom Petersen, of the State Attorney's office, and Dr. Nancy Peck, of the University of Miami's Center for Dropout Prevention, will be on that panel.

If you will, come up, please.

Tom, I know of the work that you did in connection with Grand Jury's report on high school dropouts, and I know that you have done extensive study and research in the area of dropout prevention, and I understand that you are currently on leave from the

office of the State Attorney in order to operate some pre-school programs in Miami's inner-city housing projects.

We will start off with you.

**STATEMENT OF TOM PETERSEN, ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY,
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**

Mr. PETERSEN. Thank you very much, Senator Chiles.

I appreciate the invitation to testify before you, Senator Chiles, and the Senate Budget Committee.

In 1984, while I was serving as Chief Assistant to State Attorney Janet Reno, I had the privilege of functioning as advisor on the staff of the Dade County Grand Jury, which studied the dropout issue quite extensively for some 9 months—hearing from both local and national experts—and issuing a final report, which will probably be alluded to by other witnesses besides myself, entitled: "The High School Dropout and the Inner-City School."

LOW SCORES DETERRENT TO BLACKS

That report dealt with a number of facets of the dropout problem.

It initially pointed to the relationship between the dropout phenomenon and the phenomenon of declining test scores in the inner-city schools which is a problem in Dade County, as it is in virtually every urban school system in the Nation.

Alluding to the Stanford Achievement Test scores, the Grand Jury's report stated:

In summary, not only do black students in inner-city schools score in percentiles about half the level of the scores of white non-Hispanic and Hispanic students in elementary schools, but their scores drop off to about one-third of the combined white non-Hispanic and Hispanic student scores at the high school level; thus it would appear that black students in inner-city schools begin at a significant disadvantage, and that the disadvantage becomes greater as the student progresses from the elementary school to the junior high school and to the high school.

This inevitably generates frustration, often beginning as early as kindergarten, for those who begin to accumulate low or failing grades. This, in turn, leads to the physical dropping out of the child at age 16, who, in fact, may have all but physically dropped out at age 6 or 7.

CRISIS MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED THEN REVERSED

The Grand Jury emphasized what it termed: "The difficulties in assigning responsibility for the crisis in our inner-city schools nationwide," as follows:

The crisis is nationwide, and not one peculiar to this community. I am quoting again from the report.

The responsibility lies partly inside the school and partly beyond the schoolyard. It is unfair to expect the school to reverse handicaps caused by poverty and isolation, but it is even more dangerous to accept academic low achievement as the inevitable by-product of a household surviving in poverty. We must address the crisis first

by acknowledging its existence, and second by making available as many resources as are needed to reverse these frightening trends.

The Grand Jury felt that it would be imperative that we look beyond the schoolyard for any real understanding of the causes of the dropout problem, as well as for remedial steps. This is not to in any way imply that we should de-emphasize our goal of excellence within the classroom, but, rather, it is an admonition that we must take into account the social disintegration occurring around low-income inner-city schools—a phenomenon which is now known as the feminization of poverty.

Unless recognized and addressed, that phenomenon may very well undermine any efforts we make within the schools themselves.

CRIME, DELINQUENCY, DROPOUT PARALLEL EXAMINED

Several months after the publication of the 1984 Grand Jury Report, the State Attorney proposed to the Superintendent of Schools and to the County Manager that their three offices join to undertake a unique experiment over a 3-year period of time. The experiment would establish a consortium of those three units of government with the goal of identifying and addressing the root causes of the interrelated problems of school dropouts and crime and delinquency.

Over the 3-year period, 10 to 12 inner-city neighborhoods—finite neighborhoods—would be identified.

The task was defined in the following quote from the State Attorney's letter proposing the consortium:

The program's principal objective will be to deal with the problems described by the Grand Jury Report. The problems are not peculiar to Dade County's schools, but are evident in urban inner-city schools nationwide, and the studies uniformly reveal that inner-city students enter kindergarten testing uniformly below their non-inner-city counterparts, and that the gap between the two groups widens as the student progresses from elementary school to junior high school and to high school.

The problem is a complex one that can only be dealt with in the context of the child's family and neighborhood.

No one agency is responsible for these problems, and their solution must involve a joint effort by the schools, social service agencies and the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

KEY AREAS SUGGESTED TO IMPROVE DROPOUT PROBLEM

To adequately address these problems described in the Grand Jury Report, I suggest an interagency effort in five areas:

One: Academic intervention at the pre-kindergarten level.

Two: Promotion of parental involvement in the child's learning process at the pre-school level, as well as at the kindergarten through fifty grade levels, and the development of programs for improving parenting skills and promoting financial and social stability within the family.

Three: Coordinated efforts against crime and delinquency, substandard housing and environmental problems in the neighborhoods surrounding the schools.

Four: Programs for recreation and private service group involvement in organized activities in the public parks within the neighborhoods surrounding the parks.

Five: Programs within the neighborhoods to stimulate economic development and to enhance self-sufficiency for welfare recipients.

The evidence—the letter goes on—is clear that, to meaningfully address the problems of academic under-achievement and the dropout, as well as crime and delinquency, will require addressing each of the five parts.

That ends the quote from the State Attorney's letter.

COMMUNITY SURVEY REVEALS NEEDS

During the past 2 years, my personal task has been to establish an office within each one of these neighborhoods, of which there are now four—three of them public housing projects—and to then survey the needs of each community, as the residents themselves perceive those needs, using door-to-door survey methods.

Once the residents' perceptions are identified in each one of the five areas enumerated above, the task then becomes one of coordinating and mobilizing existing resources to address the problems.

The neighborhoods—each one of them—are typical of neighborhoods throughout this nation in which the feminization of poverty has, almost unnoticed, become a harsh reality, and one that has a tremendous impact upon academic achievement in the schools.

The median age in Dade County, for example, is 35.

The median age in Larchmont Gardens—the first neighborhood selected—is 16.

The median age in Modello—the fourth neighborhood selected—is 11.

The median annual income for a family of four in each neighborhood is less than \$6,500 per year, or approximately 70 percent of the federal poverty level.

Eighty-five percent of the heads of households are single-parent female heads of households.

Eighty percent are existing on welfare.

One-half of all of the women under the age of 18 have one or more children.

The school dropout rate, overall, in the two neighborhoods is approximately 60 percent—with the dropout rate among girls being higher than that of boys, and, to make matters even worse, the crack cocaine phenomenon is on the rise and has not yet peaked at a time when substance abuse generally is on the decline, as the New York Times made clear in a front-page story only this past Sunday.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE RESOURCES VITAL TO COMBAT PROBLEM

Clearly, the dropout problem is a symptom of ominous realities in our society, which are beyond the ability of the schools to control alone and, equally clear—unlike the situation of 20 years ago, when we attempted to address similar problems—we do not have the resources, and perhaps not the will, to create new agencies.

We must rely upon our ability to coordinate existing resources—privately and public—and we must create ways by which to encour-

age and stimulate that coordination. We must—in order to fundamentally address the problems of academic under-achievement and the school dropout—find ways to bridge the large and growing gap between society's mainstream and the large and growing underclass within our cities.

CONSORTIUM STRIVES TO RAISE COMMUNITY SELF-ESTEEM

While no panacea—there are, we must candidly admit, no panaceas—the schools and the neighborhood consortium, which consists of a two-person staff—again funded jointly and equally by the State Attorney, the Dade County School Board and Metropolitan Dade County—has managed to do the following with its main objective being to provide support for the elementary and secondary schools in and around those schools in each of the five areas that I have listed above.

Number One: In the area of schools, we assisted the school system in placing pre-school programs for 3 and 4-year-olds in the housing project community centers so as to reduce the physical barriers between the schools and the communities.

These pre-school programs have demonstrated conclusively—as have their prototypes elsewhere—that the inequities in test scores can be reversed.

The graduates of these pre-schools, which are located in Dade County's worst and poorest housing projects, are starting kindergarten on an equal footing with children from more affluent neighborhoods, and academic inequities are clearly not inevitable.

Also, the consortium has been able to assist the adult and community schools division of the Dade County Public Schools in experimenting with innovative ways in which to involve young dropout parents—the single-parent heads of households who are living in poverty, and whose children are clearly at great risk of constituting our next generation of dropouts—in re-entering the school system.

We are currently engaged in a research effort funded by the State Department of Education—designed to identify programs that successfully achieve that goal.

Number Two: In the area of parental involvement, I am currently involved in an effort—which is a component of the Creative Partners in Education Program initiated by the Greater Miami Urban League—to involve parents to a greater extent in not only their children's education, but in their own, as well, keeping in mind again that, in the schools that we are speaking of now, four out of five households are headed by young single heads of households.

Number Three: With respect to crime and housing, the consortium attempts to involve the respective neighborhoods in designing programs to address substandard housing and substance abuse.

Number Four: In each one of the four neighborhoods in which the consortium is involved, the plan includes the opening or expansion of recreational programs where the core of volunteers generally vital to sports and recreational programs is absent.

The Larchmont Gardens' Little League—a fully-chartered little league consisting of four teams from that housing project—just

completed its second season playing on a field that 2 years ago was an overgrown lot, and which was refurbished entirely by private donations.

Number Five: As to economic development, the consortium generated private funding to open three resident-run non-profit grocery stores to employ and train welfare recipients in three of the neighborhoods.

In the Liberty Square and Larchmont Gardens projects, these stores were purposely situated next to the pre-school program so that the children could attend classes while their mothers worked in the stores.

QUALITY EDUCATION CAN OFFSET SOCIAL ILLS

There are no panaceas for most of our social ills, which clearly include the dropout problem, and, clearly, any attempts at solution must include a perspective which looks beyond the schoolyard, and which should not in any way be interpreted as advocating a perspective which protects inferior teachers or inferior teaching methods within the classrooms.

Only by coupling insistence on quality education within the schools with the clear recognition that what happens in the school is to a very great extent predicated on the social forces at play outside the school walls—specifically, the as-yet unaddressed phenomenon labeled the feminization of poverty—will we begin to truly turn the tide.

Chairman CHILES. Thank you, Tom.

Dr. Peck, we are delighted to have you with us as the Director of the Center for Dropout Prevention at the University of Miami.

The center was established in 1985 by the Florida Legislature to study this problem and to make recommendations, and we are happy to hear from you.

STATEMENT OF DR. NANCY PECK, UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI CENTER FOR DROPOUT PREVENTION

Dr. PECK. Thank you, Senator Chiles.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on the impact of school dropouts on the community and the possible solutions to the problem.

What I have to say draws on my experience of 3 years—working intensely in the area of dropout prevention and in the research—and from the practical responses of educators around the country.

DROPOUTS AFFECT COMMUNITY/BUSINESS

The problem of students dropping out of school, as you have already mentioned, is not just a school problem. In reality, the consequences of students dropping out of school have a greater impact upon the community and business than they do on the schools—in the form of unemployment, welfare, drug abuse, crime and teenage pregnancy.

ALIENATED STUDENTS NEED STIMULATING TO LEARN

The changing demographics of education predict a growing number of young people who fit the profile of at-risk students who

are likely to drop out, and that also includes bright and gifted students.

In today's world, the future predicted for the dropout is, indeed, gloomy, and an increasingly technological society makes education more important than it has ever been before. Therefore, it becomes more compelling for the educational system to find ways to attract disadvantaged and alienated students, and to assist them to see the relevance of education to their lives.

In recognition of the nature and severity of this problem, school districts around the country have implemented programs for dropout prevention and retention, and their aim is to assist the nearly one million students each year who are either dropouts or chronic truants.

At the same time, research efforts are being expanded to identify who and why, and to identify the essential ingredients of programs that have demonstrated success.

CONCERN AND FORESIGHT CAN AVERT PROBLEM

We know from the research that the causes of students dropping out of school are varied. Therefore, the solutions must also be varied. The alarming proportions of at-risk and alienated youth indicate that the future of dropout prevention is not in isolated programs which grow out of notions of deficit and remediation. There is a tendency to wait until the student has failed, and to then attempt to fix the problem.

A new consciousness has emerged which focuses on the ability of the community and schools to identify and assist students when they need help, and can benefit from the help before the problem becomes so severe that it is more difficult, costly or impossible to effect meaningful changes.

EDUCATORS MUST BE CURE NOT CAUSE

We must recognize that all children have a right to an education and, I think, to a diploma, and that it becomes our job to make that possible with viable alternatives, a flexibility that recognizes differing needs and a caring atmosphere for learning.

Educators must examine policies and practices to be certain that schools do not contribute to the problem unnecessarily.

I see the problem as a challenge for reducing the dropout rate threefold.

First, we need to develop successful programs for those students who are already experiencing the cycle of failure or alienation.

Secondly, we must use that information from the programs to learn about the success and effectiveness of those programs and incorporate these components into the school structure—creating a systemic change that will benefit all children, as well as high-risk children.

The third ingredient is to actively promote collaboration between community, business, parents and school.

Looking at that first piece, the special programs for potential or actual dropouts are an extremely important part of the solution, but programs cannot be the only strategy.

Schools have already documented the fact that special programs meet the needs of only a portion of the students who need assistance. Demonstration projects and special dropout prevention programs can be used as models for changing the schools. We can apply what has been learned from those projects in a new and different way. We can move away from a deficit model of education and provide positive programs and fashion the total school program to meet the needs of high-risk youth as well.

There are many systemic changes that are examples of what I am saying here, but I am just going to mention a few that I think are the most important.

One would be early identification, which has been talked about so very much.

We need to widen our vision.

We need to take our focus from the high school to the middle school and the elementary school, and there are many who feel—as Tom has just said—that the preschool is where some of our greatest hopes are, and I hope that it is coming.

We need flexible timing schedules that are sensitive to student needs.

We need staff development and teacher training that address the characteristics, needs and strategies for teaching the high-risk child, and I am not just talking about the public schools. I am also referring to the colleges.

Of course, we need a positive teacher-and-student climate, and we need to continue working in that area.

We need caring components that personalize the school for each student—such as mentoring, peer counseling and teacher advisement.

We need vigorous collaboration with parents, community and business that responds to the whole child.

We need caucuses that deal effectively with such things as attendance, peer tutoring and dealing with basic skills for all kids that need it when they need it.

Most importantly—and I hope that this will be taken into very serious consideration by the Legislature—is that we need evaluation of dropout prevention efforts to monitor the effectiveness of programs and practices.

This is so important.

To date we simply do not have sufficient data to determine which programs are, indeed, exemplary and successful.

Without that, we continue to put money into programs and we do not know whether they are working.

The last piece is collaboration.

The large number of students who are at risk of dropping out require the involvement of all segments of our society.

DROPOUT PREVENTION SHOULD CONCERN ALL

The problem of students dropping out of school does not only affect the educational community, as I said before, and, therefore, it cannot be solved by educators alone. Parents, business, government and community leaders have important contributions to make in solving the problem, and, therefore, all of these groups

must be involved in the planning and solution for dropout prevention activities.

GOVERNMENT MUST ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION WITH FUNDING

Any initiatives at the Federal or State level must recognize the importance of this collaboration. Funding must recognize local community and business efforts, and encourage collaborative efforts, and I am just going to mention very briefly a few of them which I have seen in our community:

The cooperative programs with the Private Industry Council and JTPA, where last year 1400 high-risk students were identified, paired with mentors and given attractive work incentives if they stayed in school.

This program, with its success, has been expanded for the coming year.

The business partnerships where organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Dade Partners work with high-risk students to develop leadership and pride in themselves, and businesses such as IBM and Citicorp have prioritized dropout prevention to address the problem by offering their services.

The Hispanic organizations, such as the Cuban-American National Council and Aspira, have worked with the school system in searching for solutions to curb a local problem of the disproportionate number of Hispanic students leaving school.

The numerous community groups—prenatal, health groups and child care centers—joining forces to address the problem of teenage pregnancy.

The collaborative efforts of the school system, the justice system and the county government—which Tom has described—putting in countless hours to help curb that helplessness and hopelessness which so many of our children come from.

The efforts of the Urban League, which is working countywide here and nationwide in efforts to help the child both in and out of school.

The ongoing work of the District Dropout Prevention Advisory Council that examines school practices, works with school personnel and makes recommendations for positive change.

These are only a very few of the local efforts that represent a growing mentality that our best solutions may lie in collaborative efforts.

LEADERS UNDERSTANDING/FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED

Finally, our national leaders must understand that programatic, systemic and collaborative changes to enhance the holding power of our schools cannot happen without first having a clear understanding of the importance of dropout prevention and retrieval efforts; it must become a priority.

Secondly, providing sufficient financial resources to significantly make an impact on the problem.

Since the causes of dropping out of school are so complex, our responses to the problem must be varied. There is little time left to analyze and debate the problem when we continue to lose hundreds of children each day from school.

Our responses must be programatic, systemic and collaborative if we are to significantly address the dropout prevention problem, reduce the resulting economic and social consequences and ultimately reduce the dropout rate in Florida and nationwide.

Thank you.

Chairman CHILES. Thank you and Tom.

PRE-SCHOOL ED STARTING POINT TO REVERSE TREND

A lot has been written about the role of preschool education, and you said that there have been some pretty good results shown.

Tell me more about that.

Mr. PETERSEN. Yes, sir; and, while I do not have the exact data, the department really summarized it by saying that the gains made are nothing short of phenomenal.

Chairman CHILES. Compared to where they would have been?

Mr. PETERSEN. That is right; they were able to work on a competitive basis with the more affluent children.

ALL ASPECTS OF COMMUNITY LIFE MUST BE REACHED

Chairman CHILES. You talked about mobilizing resources in the community.

Mr. PETERSEN. Right.

Chairman CHILES. How do you see that we can best try to do that?

Mr. PETERSEN. My function, as stated, is to attempt to build bridges, as it were, between the school and the community around the school—the business community and the residents of the area—and to build corporate programs that will facilitate the role of the school.

In the neighborhoods in which I function—low-income inner-city neighborhoods—85 percent, again, are single heads of households living in relative poverty.

Over the past 20 years, the great majority of households which were once coupled are now headed by young single parents.

In Florida, welfare amounts to almost nothing, so the role the schools play is increasingly difficult.

Chairman CHILES. Do you know whether anything is being done with the existing Chapter One or Head-Start money?

Mr. PETERSEN. We are trying to enhance parental involvement—getting to more single-parent heads of households.

The Dade County School System is setting up preschool programs and parental involvement programs in the inner-city schools, and I think those are of equal importance.

We cannot just look at pre-school programs to solve the problems when we have a 24-year-old mother sitting at home idle—one who has dropped out of school herself and who has maybe gotten into substance abuse.

We cannot have one without the other.

STUDENTS MORALE, SELF-ESTEEM NEED BOOSTING

Chairman CHILES. Dr. Peck, everywhere I go I hear a lot about the student who says that one special person helped him remain in

school, and I think that all of us relate back to that—to what one special person did in our educational career.

What insight can you share with us on the role of such individuals within or without the school system?

There has got to be someone who cares, and there does not seem to be someone who expresses concern for so many students who drop out.

Dr. PECK. They will tell you that in most of the research—that they drop out because no one cares—and that is the saddest documentation we have, and we are trying to look to the community, and this is where I think the community can play a very large part.

We have Business Partners, where the people in the businesses do not just give money; they become absolutely involved with their own person, and they become mentors.

They call the students, and they take them out to lunch, and they talk with them.

We have mentors, and we have peer counselors.

We need to have counselors in the schools.

We used to have counselors in the schools, but the schools have become depersonalized, which is part of the whole bureaucracy, and the students do not have someone to go to, and they seem to fall into the cracks and go out the back door, and it is exactly what you are saying: We have got to find a way in each school to put that piece of caring back in there.

MONITORING PROGRAM ESSENTIAL

Chairman CHILES. You also focused on the importance of the evaluation of dropout prevention efforts.

What should we focus on here, and how do we determine whether something is working or not?

Dr. PECK. Look at the attempts, the achievements and the expenses.

We can look at failures and there are a number of things that we can say.

We have to look at the difference it makes in a child's self-esteem—his own sense of pride.

Most important is the teacher and a supportive principal, but we have got to find a way to get that piece of caring back into each school.

The students have to have someone that they can go to.

Chairman CHILES. All right; I thank you both for your time.

We appreciate it very much, and we thank you both very much.

Our next panel is trying to get settled—the students and student dropouts.

We will have some students on this panel who are at high risk and some who have dropped out and come back, or who are currently in a dropout prevention program.

We will ask them to come forward and take their seats up here.

We have Pedro, Perry, Christopher, Christine, Lisa, Seth, and Dorothea.

I would like to ask for several of the students who have not dropped out if you can tell me what some of the peer pressures are to drop out of school—that kind of work on you to drop out.

STATEMENTS OF CHRISTOPHER, PEDRO, PERRY, SETH, CHRISTINE, DOROTHEA, AND LISA, HIGH RISK AND DROPOUT STUDENTS

CHRISTOPHER. My name is Christopher, and I never intended to be a dropout, and I never wanted to be a dropout, and it was just that I was out of school because of academic grades.

As I started seeing myself go down, I was thrown out of school because of academic grades; I was thrown out of the school system, and my teachers told me that I could not come back until I got myself right.

DISAPPOINTMENT, IDLENESS CHANGED ATTITUDE

Then, you know, as my mother found out that I had been thrown out of school, she was kind of disappointed, and my oldest brother, who had graduated in 1980, was kind of disappointed, and I could kind of see myself going down like the other guys were—sitting around the house and doing nothing, and just looking kind of crazy—so I said to myself: "Chris, this is not you. Get yourself right or you are going to be in that situation," so, after that year went by, I went to summer school and to night school, and I got that going, so I asked Mr. Keating, and, you know he sat down and talked to me for a little while, and, then, when the semester came back in, I was a junior and I was promoted, but I was also going to night school because I was short some credits, and then I started asking my teachers for advice and going to after-school programs, and my grades started to come back up, and, you know, everybody was—You know, it was: "Chris, you are improving a lot."

Everybody was telling me: "You are improving," and then I just started studying, and now I am a senior and ready to graduate. [Applause.]

DRIVE HINGES ON ENCOURAGEMENT

Chairman CHILES. You are very fortunate, Christopher, because you had some people that you knew cared about you—your mother, your brother and other people.

CHRISTOPHER. There were also the teachers in the school.

Chairman CHILES. Yes, and I was going to ask you about that.

CHRISTOPHER. They helped me a lot.

Chairman CHILES. Was there anyone in the school who particularly helped you, or who particularly counseled you, or showed you individual attention?

CHRISTOPHER. My math teacher, Ms. Love, was one, and my English teacher.

Chairman CHILES. Tell me about that, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER. Ms. Love was one of my counselors in the afternoon, and I would go in and sit down and talk with her—you know, just to talk with her.

Chairman CHILES. It sounds like you had an opportunity to look at some of the people who had dropped out, and I guess you just

decided that it was not something you wanted to see in your future.

CHRISTOPHER. That is right—not to sit at home where you cannot do anything but to wish that you were back in school, you know, because I wanted to go back to school, and it was just like the way I said; it was like that.

Chairman CHILES. That is great; that is really great, Chris.

Pedro, can you tell us something about your experiences?

PEDRO. Yes, sir; my name is Pedro, and I was last year ready to drop out because I was falling behind in my grades, and every day in school it seemed like it was the same thing, and I did not like it at all.

EXCITING VOCATIONAL INTEREST AVERTS DROPOUT

I just did not like school any longer, but they did have like a program.

I had wanted to go to business school, and they had like a program, and you went into it, and I wanted to go, and Ms. Ida Smith helped me to get into the program, and I went through it and I liked it.

Also, I had a mentor—a Ms. Polly Bain.

Chairman CHILES. That was a mentor?

PEDRO. Yes; she is really nice, and she helps a lot of kids, and I am one of the kids that she is helping.

She helps me, and she has been helping me.

I was about ready to drop out of school when one of those programs—I took the business course, and I liked it, and I do not want to leave school now, and I want to keep on going and be a businessman.

That is what I would like to be.

SCHOOL BETTER THAN HARD WORK

Chairman CHILES. When your grades started falling off, and you were thinking about dropping out, how did you find out there was some help out there and that there was some other avenue or something else for you to try?

PEDRO. Well, I was just going to drop out of school and work with my mom, because my mom owns a business, and I started working with her, but it was too hard. [Laughter.]

It was too hard, and I just could not take any more of it, so I decided to go back to school. [Laughter.]

Chairman CHILES. That is good; that is very good, Pedro, and it sounds like your mother was not making it any too easy for you, either.

PEDRO. No, sir.

MENTOR'S CARING HELPS STUDENT

Chairman CHILES. Perry, I understand that you were a dropout; is that right?

PERRY. Right.

Chairman CHILES. All right; what can you tell us about your situation, Perry?

PERRY. I was really not a dropout; I was having problems in school and with my teachers, and all of those things, you know.

Chairman CHILES. All right; tell us about it.

PERRY. I was having problems in sports, and coping with the coaches and with the teachers, and all of that, and I met Ms. Smith, and she was helping me out, and she was telling me about all of the things that—

Chairman CHILES. How did you find out about her, or how did you meet her?

[No response.]

Chairman CHILES. How did that happen?

PERRY. Well, she came to where the—I was in trouble, and I was thinking about really dropping out, you know, and then she came in and talked to me in class one day.

Chairman CHILES. She found you, so to speak; is that right, Perry?

PERRY. Right, and she was telling me, you know, that I should not drop out, and my coaches were telling me that, too, but like I did not want to listen to them, so she kept on talking to me and telling me not to drop out—talking to me and talking to me—and I just sort of realized that dropping out was not for me, you know, so I did not do it; I just stayed in school.

I did not really drop out; I just sort of—

Chairman CHILES. Have you gotten sort of turned around now, Perry?

PERRY. Yes; I have now started listening.

I did not used to want to listen at all; I just wanted to live my life like I wanted to, but now I am listening to what other people have to say.

Chairman CHILES. Do you find that things are now working out a little bit better?

PERRY. Yes.

Chairman CHILES. All right; thank you very much for coming up here and sharing your experiences with us today.

PERRY. Right.

Chairman CHILES. Keep up the good work, Perry.

Seth, I understand that you did drop out; is that right?

SETH. Yes.

Chairman CHILES. Tell us something about your experiences.

SETH. Well, I have been out of school now for about 2 years.

Chairman CHILES. For 2 years?

SETH. Yes; I dropped out in my eleventh grade year.

Chairman CHILES. All right; tell us about that please, Seth.

LIFE HARDER THAN ANTICIPATED

SETH. I was unhappy with the system and the way it worked, and I was arrogant.

I am not one to take what people say lightly, and I do not like to listen, and I never have, and I probably never will. (Laughter.)

I sort of knew what I wanted to do, and nobody else knew what I wanted—except for me—and to try to get other people to understand what you want is not an easy thing to do, and it was just a whole lot easier for me to say: "Have a nice afternoon, and it has

been fun, but I am leaving, anyway," but I found out that it is a lot harder than I had expected it to be.

Chairman CHILES. Tell us what you found when you got out there.

SETH. I worked a whole bunch of different jobs, with very little time to myself, and, when I do have a little time, I have to study in order to get my GED, first, and then to hopefully go to college—packing away money to go to college after I do that.

There is no one who helps me, and I have to do it all by myself; anything that I do has to be done without any help from anybody.

Everybody really looks down on you for dropping out of school, and, since dropping out, I feel like I have had a tag around my neck that says: "I dropped out of high school."

It is not an easy road to take, and I thought that it was going to be a whole lot easier than it has been, and, if I had it to do all over again—knowing what I do now—I would not do it, but, of course, I cannot undo what has already been done.

Chairman CHILES. Let me ask you something at this point, Seth.

SETH. OK.

ATTITUDE MADE RECEIVING HELP DIFFICULT

Chairman CHILES. I think you said that you are kind of hard-headed, or something like that, but: Was there anybody there when you were going through this process—anybody to counsel you or to try to talk to you, or anything like that, or was it just that you did not want to listen?

SETH. There were a lot of good intentions there, but, from my point of view, I almost felt like I was too advanced for what was going on, and the teachers sort of talked to you like you were still in—I was also going to college, because I was in a joint program when I was younger—a gifted program—where you could go to college at the same time that you were attending junior high school or senior high school in the—

Chairman CHILES. Excuse me, but let me ask you another question.

NO CONFIDENCE IN TEACHERS IMPAIRS LEARNING

Did you feel that school was not very relevant to you?

SETH. No; I was sitting in class there, and I was listening to somebody talk about a subject that not only had nothing—it not only had no relevance, but the person who was teaching it—to me, the person who was teaching the subject did not even know what was going on or seemed to be completely out of touch.

I was listening to science teachers, to math teachers and to social studies teachers—to what they were saying—and it was so irrelevant to what was going on, or to what one might perceive as to what was going on in the world, that you would just become a little bit disgusted with the whole thing.

In other words, you just would not want to sit in there and be listening to something that did not even remotely pertain to what you were doing.

PROGRAMS HELP BUT SELF-DISCIPLINE IS KEY

Chairman CHILES. You did not know of or find out about any alternative programs that you could have gotten into—that would have allowed you to work part time and go to school, and pursue other interests?

SETH. I had been transferred to a whole bunch of different schools.

Chairman CHILES. All right; tell us about that.

SETH. When I was younger I was an LD student, and I have been through numerous alternative programs—alternative programs at schools, alternative programs in and out of schools and after-school programs—and it really came down to the point of: Nobody can prevent a student from dropping out except the student himself, and that decision has got to be made by that person, no matter what kind of guidance he receives.

I would say that I probably received the best guidance that anyone could possibly get.

I had teachers, counselors, mentors and my grandparents, and, from every angle, all I did was get flack when I dropped out.

MORAL STANDARDS LOWERED

It is just that nobody trusts a dropout, and that is the only way to put it.

I had to lie to get jobs, and I had to lie about my age, and I had to lie about my qualifications and things of that nature in order to get the jobs, but, once I would get a job, the people would realize that I did deserve the position that I had gotten, and I moved on up in the companies that I worked for, but, to get there, I had to lie or cheat, and it was not something that I really enjoyed doing at all, but I do have to say that it did work. [Laughter.]

CHOICE IS YOURS BUT EDUCATION NEEDED

Chairman CHILES. What you are saying now is that you would not counsel a lot of other people to take the road that you did, and that you would not do it if you had it to do all over again; is that right?

SETH. I speak with a lot of people, and I see a lot of people, and I know a lot of people who want to drop out, and I tell all of them the same thing:

"You are welcome to do it, and there is no one to stop you from doing it, but you have got to realize that you can hardly even get a job with a high school diploma, and you really do need a college education, so, without a high school diploma, you will be lucky if you get anything at all".

"You have to have a high school diploma to work at the Burger King now, and it is not an easy road to take".

"You are going to have to work, and you are going to have to make money, and people are going to look down on you, and people are not going to be happy with what you did".

"Your parents are not going to be happy with you; your grandparents are not going to be happy with you; your whole family is going to look down on you."

I caught more flack about this than I ever caught before in my entire life.

I could have gone out and killed three people and I would not have caught as much flack as I did for dropping out of high school. [Laughter.]

I mean that it was unreal—the amount of flack that I caught over it.

GOALS SET BUT DIFFICULT TO REACH

Chairman CHILES. You do now recognize that you have got to get ahead, and you are saying that it is very hard now—now that you are on your own, so to speak—to go ahead and get the GED and to do all of the things that you have got to do; is that right?

SETH. Well, I really knew what I had to do from the very minute that I dropped out of school, and I said the same thing from day one—that I planned to get my GED and to enter college.

I always knew what I had to do, and I already know what my majors are.

I learned rescue—that explorer program with the Boy Scouts, and with the Metro Fire and Rescue Department, and with the Police Department—and I happen to look forward to becoming a fire fighter paramedic.

I have ridden rescue, and I have been on accident scenes, and I have taken classes, and I have attended college, and I have done everything that I possibly could to further this along, but dropping out of high school surely did not help.

I always knew what I wanted to do, but now I just have to go ahead and do it.

It is one thing to know what you want to do, but it is quite another to have to try to do it, and, now that I actually have to do it, it is a little bit more than—now that I have to do it, it has turned out to be a little bit harder than I ever thought that it would be.

Chairman CHILES. Thank you, Seth; thank you very much for sharing your experiences with us.

Christine, please tell us something about your experiences.

CHRISTINE. I really did not want to drop out, and they put me in the Dropout Prevention Program because of all of the absences that I had been having.

When I was in the ninth grade, I had missed about 58 days in the whole year, and then—

Chairman CHILES. Why was that?

CLUB GIVES SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

CHRISTINE. It was just not showing up—that I did not feel like that was the thing to do—but, then, with some pushing by some of my teachers and getting into a club—when you get into a club, they usually want you to be there all the time, and everything, so every year I will miss a few days, but not anywhere near as many as I had been.

I went from 58 to about 40, and, then, last year, I only had about 20.

Chairman CHILES. It was important to you that the people in your club expected you to be there?

CHRISTINE. Yes; they push you into it.

Chairman CHILES. In other words, you felt that it was important—that you had to be there?

CHRISTINE. It was to be as smart as they are and to show up.

ATTITUDE CHANGE MAKES SCHOOL NICER

Chairman CHILES. Did your school work start improving?

CHRISTINE. Yes; it did.

Chairman CHILES. Things are coming along pretty well now; are they?

CHRISTINE. Yes; it is pretty good, and I am now getting along with all of my teachers and it is much nicer when you get along with all of the teachers, and you can do a lot of things.

Chairman CHILES. It does make a difference.

CHRISTINE. Yes; it does.

Chairman CHILES. When you had the 58 absences, did you feel that there were people who cared about you, friends, or family members—people who cared that you remain in school?

CHRISTINE. Well, I really did not know many people when I came in, but my sister and my brother were always pushing me into keeping on because they had graduated, and I just got lazy.

Chairman CHILES. It was important to have those people push you and encourage you?

CHRISTINE. Yes; it was.

Chairman CHILES. That is good, and we thank you for coming down here and talking with us today.

Would you like to tell us what your experience has been?

COUNSELOR'S HELPS MAKE BETTER PARENT/STUDENT

DOROTHEA. Well, I am in this program because I am a teenage parent, and I was low in my grades, and the first 9 weeks passed, and a pass came up to the class, and I said: "What did I do?" and they told me: "You are low on your grades, and you missed a lot of days out of school," and they sat down and talked with me, and I said: "I am having problems in my home."

I was not having problems in my home, but I did not want to study, and I was just doing what I wanted to do, really, but now I have a counselor to talk with me every Tuesday, and now my grades are better.

Chairman CHILES. Your grades are better now?

DOROTHEA. Yes.

Chairman CHILES. What year of high school were you in when you had your baby?

DOROTHEA. Last year.

Chairman CHILES. That was in the ninth grade?

DOROTHEA. I was in the ninth grade, but I had it in the tenth.

Chairman CHILES. What grade are you in now?

DOROTHEA. Eleventh.

Chairman CHILES. You are doing good?

DOROTHEA. Oh, yes.

Chairman CHILES. That is great, and how is the baby doing?

DOROTHEA. All right.

Chairman CHILES. In addition to the counseling that you got in regard to your school work, was that counseling helpful to you as a mother, as well?

DOROTHEA. Yes; it helped.

Chairman CHILES. How did you find out about the help, or about how to get into the program?

DOROTHEA. I was sitting in class, and the first 9 weeks passed, and a pass came for me, and I wondered why, and I said: "What did I do? I did not do anything."

They told me about it, and they told me that I would have to do better, and then they started talking to me, and they were behind me a lot, so I improved.

Chairman CHILES. You mean right behind you.

DOROTHEA. Right.

Chairman CHILES. As it turned out, that was kind of helpful.

DOROTHEA. Yes.

Chairman CHILES. All right; that is very good, and we appreciate hearing from you.

Lisa, we will hear from you now.

SCHOOL/PERSONAL PRESSURES EFFECT STUDIES

LISA. I think that—when I began high school—I had a lot of problems blending in, and it was hard for me to get into that transitional phase; it was really difficult, and I had some personal problems as well, so, while sitting in class and trying to learn my lessons, I had problems going through my mind.

I had good grades, and I had a four point two average, and I was in two varsity sports, and I was involved in clubs, but it began to be less of a challenge and more of a responsibility that I had—that I had to; I had to—and it got to where I was just tired and worn out completely.

You know, I felt that I had responsibilities, and that—if I were not there—there would be people who would be counting on me, and, if I did not show up, I felt that I had let them down, and it became like just a burden, more than anything.

I did not take clubs and sports as being something that would be fun to be in; I took them as: "Oh, my God, I am going to be late," and it was almost like I had a job or something.

I was 13 years old, and it started to really interfere with my personal life and with my school life and everything, and I was not learning the way that I should have been, and, overall, I just—I did not feel like dropping out of school; I felt like dropping out of life, really, and a couple of my friends recognized it, and I began to go into a depressive state, and they started talking to me and they were trying to drag out of me what was wrong.

NEW MEANING ACHIEVED THROUGH CLUB, COUNSELING

I then got into the club, and, from then on, I have been doing very well.

Ms. Gloria Cunningham, our school sponsor, also counseled me for a year, and, then, in the next 2 years, I became a counselor for Switch, and I have been helping kids who are in the same position

that I was in, or I have been trying to be a role model for them—as I had role models.

Chairman CHILES. You have a different set of values now as to what clubs are all about and what sports are all about?

LISA. I had to learn to understand that it is a part of life and something that you enjoy when you are in high school.

Chairman CHILES. I think it is also very important that you are out there trying to help some others now, because you have been through it, and you can recognize some of their symptoms, and, of course, no one better than you can say: "Wait a minute; you have got this turned around."

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us here today, Lisa.

This has been very interesting because we have heard about a lot of varied experiences—again telling us that there is no single problem or solution to it.

Some of you were bored; some of you were having poor work performance, and, for some of you, the work was too easy, so it kind of reinforces the idea that there is not a single problem here.

One of you said that it was different—that you saw some guys out there and that you did not want to be in the same situation they were—but, what I really want to know is: Did you see some people out there who looked like they were doing well, and did you think: "That looks pretty good, and I could be doing that, too"?

Did any of you feel like that?

EASY LIFE NOT AS EASY AS IT LOOKS

SETH. Definitely, because a lot of people—in America anybody can supposedly do anything that they want to, regardless of where they come from or what they have done previous to being here, and, you know, you watch TV, and you see what goes on in the real world with all of these people making all of this money—whether in legal or illegal activities—and you would love to have a piece of it. [Laughter.]

You see it, and you would love to have a piece of it, and you ask yourself why you should not have a piece of what they have. [Laughter.]

You know: If they can do it, why not you? [Laughter.]

Chairman CHILES. It looked real easy to you, and you could not think of any reason why you should stay on the inside when you could be doing it on the outside; is that it?

SETH. Yes; definitely.

Part of it was: Why not get into the work force and pack away some of the money?

You know, when I first dropped out, I—you know, money has a meaning to you, and you do sort of understand it, but, when you had never before been actually completely responsible for yourself, you were really not—you did not have to pay rent, and you did not have to pay the gas company, and you did not have to pay the water company, and you did not have to pay the electric company, and you did not have to pay the bill for the garbage tax, and you—all of a sudden you are paying rent and taxes and food bills and gas bills and garbage bills, and then your truck breaks down and your car breaks down, and you have no money left, and you sit

there and go: "Oh, well," and then you cannot get to work and make the money to pay the rent, so how can you pay for your car or your truck to be fixed?

By the time you are done, you have got a million plus one things to pay for, and it all adds up real quickly, and you learn very quickly that it is not an easy road and that you are going to have to really work hard and break your back in order to make it, and, then, if you do make it through, you have still got a good long way to go before you even begin to see the end of it.

Chairman CHILES. Somebody was saying this morning—which was interesting—that our dropout rate at one time in this Nation was higher than it is today. In fact, I believe that it was something like 90 percent at one time, but it did not make a lot of difference, because there were a lot of jobs available, and most of the people were doing work that did not require a high school education.

During that time, anybody could get a shovel and go out and get a job, but the labor market is changing, those jobs are not out there any longer.

PLUSH JOB NOT AVAILABLE FOR DROPOUTS

SETH. There are a lot of people who are afraid of work, too, and a lot of these people who are dropping out think that they are going to just walk right in and get a real nice cushy job where they can sit down at a desk and do nothing but move papers around all day.

I have been on the tops of roofs in 95-degree heat, nailing nails for 10 hours at a time, and I have worked for 4 days straight—sleeping for maybe an hour—and I am now involved with five different Jobs all at once.

I will go to one job, and then I will go home and take a shower and change, and then I will go to another job.

I work from Thursday until Sunday, and I sleep an average of 2 hours.

I work all day, and I come home and take a shower and change, and then I go right out to work again, and I work until 6 o'clock in the morning, and I come home again and take a shower and change, and then I go back to work again, and my family looks at me like: "You have got to be crazy," and I am. [Laughter.]

I finally realized that I had to be a little bit looney to have done what I did.

Chairman CHILES. You are not just cruising around in your sports car all the time and enjoying the good life now that you are out there?

SETH. No; I am not, and, as a matter of fact, my car does not even run right now. [Laughter.]

It is a combination of everything.

Chairman CHILES. Pedro, let me ask you this:

From your experience—you said that you had tried it for a little while—do you think you are in a position to give some advice to somebody who might be on the verge of dropping out?

BRUSH WITH LAW TEACHES VALUE OF SCHOOL

PEDRO. Well, it is not all that easy, but, as to the question that you asked about before: I did have a friend who had dropped out of

school, and he started working with his family, and a week later I saw him driving two brand-new cars, and I figured that—if he could do it—I could do it, too, but a week later I found out that the cars had been stolen, and he went to jail. [Laughter.]

I thought that—if he could do it—I could do it, too, and the first time I went and stole a car I was arrested, and I paid for it, and it was not easy—paying for it.

It was stupid to steal a car, because, one way or the other, you are going to get busted, and you are going to have to pay for it.

I say keep away from the streets, and, if you can go back to school, do it.

Chairman CHILES. You have already told us that you are doing some counseling, but is there a network out there trying to help other people?

COUNSELING CHANGES LIFE PERSPECTIVE

PEDRO. Yes; there are a lot of people to help you.

I went up to the office, and I said: "I am going to drop out," and then I went—

Even your own parents will not—there was a point where even my own parents did not care, and, when I saw that, I just did what I did, but I said: "No way; I am not going back," and my counselors helped me a lot, and now I am planning to graduate.

Chairman CHILES. That is fine; that is very fine.

Do you see some other fellows out there that you think you could give a little bit of advice to, or that you could help counsel, Christopher?

DESIRE TO STAY IN SCHOOL ESSENTIAL

CHRISTOPHER. In a way, I think so; yes, but, when you try to talk to people sometimes about those situations, you know, it is sort of like: "I do not want to hear all of that, because I know what I am going to do," and that is when I leave it right there—just like that.

There are a lot of people that I have tried to talk to, but it has been the same response: "I know what I am going to do, so do not come around here telling me what to do, man—to go back to school and all of that," and I leave it right there.

Chairman CHILES. Perry, it does sound like it is important, though, that people have a feeling that they have somebody out there who cares about them; is that right?

PERRY. Right.

Chairman CHILES. You got that feeling when you were going through your problems; did you not?

PEER PRESSURE ANOTHER CHALLENGE FOR DROPOUTS

PERRY. Well, where our school is, it is like in between drug areas, and I was so close because like most of my friends sell drugs, and they have been trying to tell me: "Go on, man. Get into this," but a week later they were getting busted for selling drugs, so I just said that I could not take that road, and I went on back to school so that I would not be in that predicament.

I did not want to be in that, so I just said: "I am going on back to school and doing everything right," and that is what I did.

Chairman CHILES. Do you think there is any way that we can have something out there that is kind of like a buddy system, or something like that, so that a potential dropout will know that there is somebody they can talk to, or who will listen to them or care about them?

[No response.]

Chairman CHILES. Evidently Seth never felt that he found the right person who would listen to him.

RIGHT ATTITUDE HELPS COMMUNICATION

Seth, you said that you did not want to listen to anybody else, but it seems that you never found anybody who wanted to listen to what you had to say, either; is that right?

SETH. It was really not so much that—that people did not want to listen to what I had to say.

People sort of have no choice, since I am six feet-two, and I have always been huge, so it has been more like: "You listen to what I have got to say or something is going to happen." [Laughter.]

It is not so much listening as it is understanding what I have to say.

Chairman CHILES. They might listen to you, but: Do they hear you?

SETH. People are very unflexible, and, you know, if you take a bad attitude, they take a bad attitude, and it works that way with everything that you do.

If I have a good attitude, they have a good attitude too.

A lot of people listened, but it was more or less that they did not understand.

Chairman CHILES. Let us start all over again—where you are back in the eleventh grade—and let me ask you: What do you think might have kind of turned you the other way?

[No response.]

Chairman CHILES. You said that you had to learn some of these lessons yourself.

SETH. Right.

Chairman CHILES. What might have turned that situation around?

FAMILY PRESSURE ALTERS SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS

SETH. Well, after I left the standard high schools—after I left Kilian Senior High School, I was introduced to a program called the Ace Academy, and I entered that school, and I was doing fairly well.

I had a 3.8 average, which was one of my higher grade point averages, and I was doing very well in school, and, you know, all of the teachers seemed to enjoy having me in their classes—supposedly—and my homework was getting done, but it was an exceptionally easy school, and, in fact, it was too easy, and I always had all of my work done before even leaving school.

I wound up leaving that school over a lot of inflexibility points, and, when I say that, I mean: You would say something, and then—well, I was doing very well in school, and I was having no

problems, but I was having quite a number of absences—quite a few days missed—because of family problems and things like that.

A lot of stuff was going on at that particular time between my parents, and with my little brother, and everything of that nature, and, for some reason, I was stuck right there in the middle, even though I was not in the problems that my little brother was having, and I was not in the problems that my parents were having, but I was somehow in the middle—being the mediator—and, you know: “It is not my job; sorry. It is not in my contract,” but I got stuck doing it, and there were a lot of pressures all at once, and, then finally, it was really easier for me to say: “Look, I had to take 2 days off because I was sick,” and then I would have arguments at school, and it finally came down to: “I am not here in school to argue,” and that was what was happening—that I was going to school and arguing daily.

Chairman CHILES. Nobody there understood about the pressures you were under?

SETH. Everybody faces pressures, but everybody has different ones, and you have got to understand that there are certain points when somebody reaches an age where they have got to do what they have got to do.

Chairman CHILES. Well, I thank you all very much for agreeing to come up here and let me hear from you.

You have certainly given me a good understanding that there is no one simple problem, and it took some courage on the part of each one of you to come up here and share your experiences with us, and I thank you all very much. [Applause.]

We will now look at the concerns of the community, and we will hear from Victoria Hernandez, the Executive Director of Aspira of Florida, and from T. Willard Fair the President of the Greater Miami Urban League, and from Ed Wahl, the Executive Vice President of Citicorp, and from Guarione M. Diaz, the Executive Director of the Cuban-American National Planning Council.

Victoria, we will start off with you.

Aspira of Florida is a private community-based dropout prevention program that focuses on the special problems of Hispanic youth, and you all sponsor some major programs and use some innovative approaches to try to get to the at-risk students.

STATEMENT OF VICTORIA HERNANDEZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ASPIRA OF FLORIDA

Ms. HERNANDEZ. Thank you, Senator Chiles, and good morning. It is an honor for me to come before this hearing and present testimony.

I am testifying—as you have mentioned—on behalf of Aspira of Florida, Inc., which is a Hispanic Community-based organization which I serve as Executive Director of, and, if I may, I would like to just briefly introduce the organization.

ASPIRA'S GOALS SET TO HELP PREVENT DROPOUTS

Aspira's mission is the development of a better educated, more community conscious Hispanic minority youth, and, central to this

mission, there are three major goals designed to prepare our youth as the future leaders of our community, and that is as follows:

First: To develop the leadership potential of Hispanic minority youth, foster a commitment to dedicate their skills to the advancement of the community, and

Second: To motivate, orient and assist Hispanic minority youth in their intellectual, personal and cultural development through counseling and educational services, and

Third: To advocate for greater access to quality educational and leadership programs and opportunities.

Aspira of Florida firmly believes in the development of other minority youth, and, to that end, it also commits its efforts and resources.

ORGANIZATION SERVES HISPANIC YOUTH FOR QUARTER CENTURY

Aspira of Florida was founded by local community leaders in 1981 and is a member of the National Aspira Association, Inc. Now in its 25th year as the first non-profit organization in the United States dedicated to encouraging and promoting education and leadership among Latin youth, there are associate offices in New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico and Washington, DC.

Currently, Aspira operates a School Dropout Prevention/Leadership Development Program, a Youth Gang Intervention Program called Project GAIN, a Health Careers and Public Policy Leadership Program.

Approximately 70 percent of our students are Hispanic, from the various groups—Puerto Rican, Cuban, Nicaraguan, et cetera—and 30 percent of our kids are black or Haitian American.

With the cooperation of the Dade County Public Schools, Aspira maintains its programs currently in ten junior and senior high schools—schools that are targeted especially because of the characteristics of their students being considered at risk.

The focus of my testimony today is not to overwhelm you with frightening statistics regarding the school dropout rate and its relation to the future of our country; it is to highlight some areas of concern that, in particular, affect Hispanic youth and the Hispanic community.

I know, Senator Chiles, that you fully understand and grasp the enormity of the situation, and your press release on pending legislation and comments are replete with such statistics and findings.

HISPANICS DROPOUT FOR VARIOUS REASONS

In 1985, according to the Office of Educational Accountability for the Dade County Public Schools, 44 percent of all school dropouts were Hispanic. The reasons for these youth dropping out are not their statistical abstract; however, studies that have been conducted in recent years in Dade County—and our own observations and experiences—indicate several key factors in explaining the Hispanic school dropouts, and they are as follows:

Number one is grade retention of one or more years.

Number two is the economic need.

Number three is the language difference and difficulties.

Number four is alienation.

This is not to ignore other factors, such as academic failure, absenteeism, et cetera, as profiled in the identification of potential dropouts.

TEACHERS MUST BE MORE SENSITIVE

The practice of repeating an entire school grade for failing to have learned and passed the subject material is not a new phenomenon, nor should its detrimental consequences on a child be a startling revelation to any of us.

As far back as 1909, when Professor Leonard Ayers conducted the first study of high school dropouts in the United States, he found the single leading factor of why kids drop out to be grade retention.

The rapid emotional, psychological and physical changes that children experience from one year to the next require that policy-makers and educators be more sensitive and accommodating.

With more and more Hispanic immigrants entering our Florida schools every year, we cannot afford to continue using this practice as a method of teaching the child.

Needless to say, a 15-year-old in the sixth grade with 11-year-old peers will not remain in that school for very long.

SUPPORT ROLES OF MALES LED TO DROPOUT

The economic reality of Hispanic families also places heavy pressures on their youth—especially upon the male teenager. Male Hispanics drop out for such reasons in greater numbers than any other group.

The traditional values and sex-role expectations of Hispanics need to be understood in the context of real economic hardships; however, even with Hispanic families that do not suffer poverty, the financial burden to support those extras for the family are inordinately placed upon the Hispanic male.

INCENTIVES/REALITY IN WORK PROGRAMS NEEDED

While work experience programs implemented at the school level are very important, additional programs need to be created which provide the following:

- A. Mentorship by an adult at every work place;
- B. Scholarship or bonus incentives if the student remains in school; and
- C. Counseling on career choices that bridge the gap between the realities of our technological market world and the student's often-mistaken illusions of the job market, or of what the job market is all about.

JOINT EFFORT OF ENCOURAGEMENT VITAL

In the 1950s, a high school dropout still earned 98 percent of the average income of a graduate. Today it is estimated that a high school graduate will earn \$250,000 more in a lifetime than a dropout.

Partnerships between employers, the schools and programs implemented by community-based organizations and private agencies

for students need to be promoted and endorsed by a national youth employment policy which Congress should enact.

While there may be some today who wish that all foreign-speaking people in the United States would disappear, the fact remains that we are also becoming a more mixed population—with Hispanics becoming the fastest-growing minority.

NEW LOOK SHOULD BE GIVEN BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Bilingual education has made the transition to learning in the English language more effective and proficiency in English is a goal that all Hispanics treasure, and we endorse such initiatives as the English Proficiency Act; however, our Hispanic children suffer and experience academic failure if they are exited from bilingual programs before they are ready to be immersed in an all-English classroom. Such a practice only serves to promote academic failure and frustration. Hispanics need to be assured that our Federal Government is committed to bilingual education, and at the same time, more research needs to be conducted and improvements made in these programs. Likewise, parents and adults who do not themselves speak English need to have more language programs funded and made available to them.

True outreach to the Hispanic parent must also be the cornerstone to every educational issue and initiative if it is to be successful in retaining our students, and there should not be any contradiction in a policy that respects the unique linguistic and cultural patterns of a community and concomitantly promotes the learning of the English language.

BOREDOM, SENSE OF BELONGING PLAGUE HISPANICS

Another factor that has been found—especially among Hispanic youth dropping out—is boredom and alienation, which are often cited as reasons for dropping out of school among all ethnic groups.

A 1984 Grand Jury investigation of school dropouts in Dade County reconfirmed this impression by the dropouts themselves.

What to do about this lack of identification with our schools, teachers, programs, activities and values is a disturbing question, but perhaps our answer can be found in what Hispanic students describe as the missing link for them in school, and that is—quote—someone who cares.

In a national study sponsored by the National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics, which included Miami, the Hispanic youths cited not having someone they could relate to, confide in or who cared for them in school as a stark and lonely reality.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS BRIDGE GAP WITH SCHOOLS

Educational policies that increase teacher-pupil ratio, that do not allow for less paperwork and more student contact hours by counselors, and that do not allow for student involvement in extra-curricular activities unless a certain grade-point average is maintained, and that do not prioritize the hiring of more Hispanic counselors, all discourage the human interaction and basic caring for our students.

One of the primary advantages that we feel community-based organizations, in particular, provide schools with are those extra role models and caring adults who reach out to the students.

Our schools cannot any longer afford to be understaffed and overpopulated if we are to effectively reach and relate to our students. We cannot blame the student for being turned off. We must institute programs that will motivate and involve the student at a personal level.

RECOMMENDATIONS ASPIRA FEELS WILL DETER DROPOUTS

In summary, Aspira offers the following set of recommendations and priorities:

One: A serious analysis of the policy of grade retention, especially for non-English speaking students, and greater innovation in scheduling small groups of students who are failing classes to be placed with peers of their own age.

Two: A national youth employment policy which would include emphasis on mentorships, scholarship incentives and career counseling.

Three: A firm commitment to bilingual education with the necessary resources and proper training of teachers, as well as increased programs for English proficiency for adults.

Four: Policies that involve Hispanic parents in the educational programs of their children.

Five: Educational policies that provide for more individualized contact with students by teachers, counselors and adults collaborating from community-based organizations and agencies.

In addition, Aspira believes that policymakers at all levels must recognize and become sensitive to the increasingly diverse Hispanic populations of our communities—especially in Florida.

EDUCATION TAILORING TO CULTURAL CHANGES URGED

The changing demographics no longer indicate a homogeneous Hispanic culture in Dade County.

A recently arrived Nicaraguan child, a Puerto Rican youth from New York and a Cuban-American student all bring varying values, expectations and learning styles that schools must appreciate in order to tailor more effective classroom teaching.

NATION MUST ALTER COURSE OF DROPOUTS

As a nation, we are challenged by the devastating effects and waste of human and economic potential caused by our high school dropouts. Because of its dire consequences to all, we cannot continue to deal with the issue as a purely educational one delegated only to the schools.

Community-based organizations—especially Hispanic and minority-run ones—have long been concerned and have played a crucial role in assisting youths and parents.

Partnerships with CBOs should be mandated in any legislation regarding the prevention of school dropouts.

The growing minority populations represent an underdeveloped national resource that will become increasingly important to our

nation's economic, political and military strength as the majority population ages.

We must begin to adopt policies to current and future demographic realities that will insure a quality of life that all of our people can enjoy.

Chairman CHILES. Thank you very much.

We will now hear from T. Willard Fair.

T., I know that you have been involved—as the chief executive officer of the Greater Miami Urban League—with dropout prevention efforts.

STATEMENT OF T. WILLARD FAIR, PRESIDENT, GREATER MIAMI URBAN LEAGUE

Mr. FAIR. Thank you, Senator Chiles.

Chairman CHILES. I want to assure all of you that I have already read your statements, so, if you will summarize them for us, we will have a little more time for questions.

Mr. FAIR. I will most assuredly try my best, Senator, to be brief, but, when one is a social worker and a Missionary Baptist, that really is very difficult. [Laughter.]

Chairman CHILES. I know; I have that same problem myself. [Laughter.]

SYSTEMWIDE APPROACH NEEDED

Mr. FAIR. It is quite obvious to us at the Urban League—as we look at the issue of dropout prevention and become concerned about dropout rates—that the only way to resolve this problem is with a systemwide approach.

We believe that—as we look at the resolution of the problem—there are some six issues that we would like to examine.

We have heard a great deal of talk here this morning which clearly points to the first issue of dropout prevention.

We believe that the only way to resolve this problem is with a systemwide approach.

We believe that, as we approach that resolution of the problem, there are some six issues that we would like to examine.

TEACHER PROFILE AND RECRUITMENT

We have heard a great deal of talk here this morning which clearly points to the first issue—that of teacher profile and recruitment.

We believe that we must maximize the potential for creating an environment—an environment in which both teachers and students can function at optimum levels, and, to do this, we believe that certain prerequisites should exist and must be met.

Number One: The training, recruitment and placement of teachers must be done with the utmost care to protect the emotional and psychological needs of youth.

Number Two: Teachers must believe fundamentally that all youth can learn.

Number Three: Teachers in the inner-city schools must be competent, sensitive and caring individuals.

Number Four: Last but not least, the diminishing pool of teachers who meet the desired criteria must be replenished.

We must begin to look at new and innovative ways to attract teachers—to attract them to become teachers—and to attract expertise from the private sector.

The first recommendation is: To attract the types of individuals needed, we must groom college students in teacher education centers, as we call them.

These centers would encompass pre-service internships—beginning with the sophomore year—for potential educators.

For those persons already in the system, paid sabbaticals and training should be offered to bring them to the desired level of functioning.

The second recommendation is: Cooperative education, as spoken of this morning, is—

We do believe that cooperative education—focused on math, science and language arts—should be instituted once again utilizing private sector employees who possess the needed skills as on-loan or employed staff.

Additionally, we believe that educational corps—like the old Peace Corps—should be developed which offer college tuition in exchange for 5 years of service to the education system for academically-qualified students.

The government's response should provide financial support for the funding of this recommendation, and tax incentives should be made available to employers who participate in loaning their staff to the educational district.

Enough has been said about pre-school programs, and I will only say that we need to look very closely at expanding the number and capacity of pre-schools in this country.

Obviously, from all of the research that we have looked at, they do make a difference.

CALL FOR EXCELLENCE

Let us look at an issue that is very popular in the bigger communities but which is not looked at very carefully, and which could have an adverse effect or impact on dropout rates in the inner-city schools, and that is the issue of the call for excellence.

The call for excellence for high school graduates can impact adversely on average students.

While I am not wishing to diminish the need for excellence, it should not adversely impact the average population by forcing them to drop out.

Any thrust-for-excellence policy—in my judgment—which has systemwide impact should be reviewed by all to determine its emotional and psychological impact upon the at-risk students.

If there is a potential adverse impact, the needed student support items should be identified and recommended to assist the at-risk group in remaining in school and being able to compete.

We cannot afford to—in the name of excellence—create another opportunity to give those students we heard from here this morning another reason for dropping out, and, once again, the govern-

ment must begin to increase the funding to support the special supports of at-risk students.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

As to the issue of special programs: Dade County is an immense urban center with all of the corresponding variables related to housing, employment health care, education, and so forth, which negatively impact on those of low socio-economic status who also comprise the at-risk population.

The education system has to be restructured so that it personalizes the education experience for students.

All models developed must build upon the strengths of students.

We believe that the various educational models which foster a reduction in the student-teacher ratio must be developed and implemented, and that all support institutions—health, housing, employment, social welfare, and so forth—should be coordinated within the educational setting.

This will allow students to be served utilizing the holistic approach, thus nullifying the fragmentation which leads to frustration and ultimate dropping out.

The government's response should be the funding of education, health and human services in a collaboration manner with the school district being responsible for the coordination of services to students.

This will maximize the benefits received by the students.

Tax incentives should be offered to the corporate community in an attempt to have them support alternative learning models for at-risk youth.

GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT NEEDED

The fifth issue: The need for gainful employment based on economic deprivation is overwhelming among at-risk youth, and this is true for the single youth and teenage parent.

Additionally, the sale of drugs—and the large amounts of money to be made—has become a major factor in the decision to leave school for many inner-city students.

Our recommendations are that adult education must be maintained and expanded to accommodate those students who must work.

Students must be encouraged to return to school after the birth of children, and they should be given all social service benefits necessary to facilitate remaining in school.

Legal leniency is needed in making laws which define the sale of drugs as a felony irrespective of age, thereby eliminating the juvenile offender status which affords limited incarceration and a return to the streets to resume business as usual.

We also recommend experimental schools which operate on flexible schedules to accommodate student needs.

The government's response must be to enact legislation which allows for the treatment of youth or adults within the judicial system when the charge is the sale and distribution of drugs.

The government must enact legislation to terminate all social welfare benefits to teenage parents who either return to and com-

plete high school or equivalency requirements, and to those who have repeat pregnancies prior to the completion of high school or the GED.

The government must provide funding for flexible scheduling within the education district.

COMPUTER-ASSISTED TRAINING

The sixth issue is: Computer-assisted training is considered an excellent learning tool for at-risk students.

Our recommendation is that computer-assisted learning be expanded in the Dade County School System.

The government should provide increased funding to support the implementation and expansion of computer-assisted training for at-risk students.

EXPANDED PARENT EDUCATION

The next issue is parental involvement as it relates to supporting the education system's efforts, which is needed and can be a valuable tool in preventing dropouts. Many socio-economically disadvantaged parents are in many instances unable to assist students because they have educational deficiencies which make this impossible.

Literacy training for parents should be offered with a focus on assisting parents to teach children and to provide cultural and educational outlets to at-risk youngsters.

The government must provide the funding needed to implement and expand parent education at the community level.

I have defined the problems, made recommendations and suggested governmental responses to a very complex problem which has the potential of adversely affecting all Dade County residents.

It is my fervent hope that together all of us, working together, can resolve this problem.

Once again, the role of the Federal Government is very simple, and that is to supply some money to get it done.

Thank you. [Applause.]

Chairman CHILES. Thank you, T.

Our next witness is Mr. Ed Wahl, who is the executive vice president of Citicorp Savings of Florida.

Citicorp is the sponsor of a number of cooperative efforts in education—several of them aimed at combatting the dropout problem.

Mr. Wahl is going to talk to us some about how the dropout problem affects business.

STATEMENT OF ED WAHL, EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT, CITICORP SAVINGS OF FLORIDA

Mr. WAHL. I am Ed Wahl, executive vice president of Citicorp Savings of Florida, and I am pleased to be here today on behalf of Citicorp Savings, the various other Citicorp business in Florida and our 2,500 employees.

We commend you, Senator, for the leadership you are demonstrating by bringing the critical dropout problem to national attention and by encouraging Federal involvement in finding workable solutions.

Citicorp has a long-standing commitment to improving the public education system both on a national and local level, and throughout South Florida citicorp businesses donate thousands of dollars and invest countless hours in support of organizations that promote quality education for all.

As we know, the public education system graduates many superb students who are highly qualified to enter the job market in entry-level positions.

NEED FOR WELL EDUCATED WORK FORCE CRITICAL

Unfortunately, as the population in this country grows older, the pool of skilled individuals necessary to fill entry-level positions is diminishing, thus the ability of the nation's education system to meet the needs of both private and public sectors for a well educated work force becomes even more critical.

Any breakdown in that system—as seen in the increasing number of graduates who are functionally illiterate—is cause for great concern.

Our Nation's businesses spend over \$30 billion annually on employee training, and much of that training is the remediation of basic skills, but, along with this lack of basic skills, these students lack important employability traits—reliability, a positive attitude, problem-solving skills and an ability to acquire and apply new knowledge.

DROPOUT STATISTICS ALARMING

Thus far, we have spoken only of those students who have received high school diplomas; however, the problems of the high school dropout and of those students currently within the school system and considered to be at risk of dropping out today weigh heavily upon the mind of corporate America.

The dropout statistics are alarming.

Although our statistics may differ a little bit from yours, Senator, we see that 25 percent of today's ninth graders—one out of every four of our Nation's youths between the ages of 16 and 18—will not complete high school.

That amounts to nearly 1 million students per year, and, at 35 percent, Florida's dropout rate is higher than the national average.

In some major urban cities it is estimated that as many as 50 percent of in-school youth are considered to be at risk of dropping out, and that the actual dropout rate is as high as 40 percent.

One hundred billion dollars is spent on education annually—making it the largest industry in the United States.

If any other U.S. industry reported a 25-percent product rejection rate, that industry would not survive, but the education system will not be the entity that fails to survive due to its high failure rate; instead, it will be the economy and the standard of living of the entire country that falls victim to the dropout problem.

\$30 BILLION SPENT ON EMPLOYEE TRAINING ANNUALLY

In addition to the \$100 billion that is spent annually on education, our Nation's businesses spend over \$30 billion annually on employee training—providing what is commonly called the shadow

educational system, since much of this training represents the remediation of basic skills.

To continue to remain competitive in the world markets, this country's businesses must be able to allocate these dollars now spent on remediation of basic skills for more productive efforts, such as research and development.

If we view the dropout problem as a disease which strikes our Nation's youth, then it is truly of epidemic proportions.

We once believed that students who dropped out could at least enter the work force as blue-collar workers, but, in reality, the vast majority of dropouts do not possess even the most basic skills necessary to get these so-called blue-collar jobs.

Instead, they tend to drop from school into the unemployment lines, onto the welfare rolls and into the prisons.

DROPOUT EPIDEMIC CONCERNS CITICORP SAVINGS

How does this epidemic affect Citicorp Savings, and why are we concerned?

Citicorp Savings is concerned for a variety of reasons.

As an employer, as a provider of financial services, as a corporate citizen and taxpayer, and as an association made up of hundreds of individuals who are striving to maintain and improve the quality of life for ourselves, our families and our future generations, we are concerned.

At Citicorp, all entry-level positions require a high school diploma or a GED as a minimum qualification, and the same requirement is true for most of the major corporations.

Throughout the country, entry-level positions requiring only basic skills are rapidly disappearing.

With the increase in technology in the banking industry, the need to hire individuals with improved technical skills is growing, and, as futurist John Naisbitt, the author of *Megatrends*, stated:

"The most formidable challenge will be to train people to work in the information society.

"Jobs will become available, but who will possess the high-tech skills necessary to fill them?

"Not today's graduates who cannot manage simple arithmetic or write basic English, and certainly not the unskilled, unemployed dropouts who cannot even find work in the old sunset industries."

COST OF DROPOUT PROBLEM STAGGERING

The cost of the dropout problem to our Nation's economy is staggering in terms of lost taxes, lost human potential, lost productivity and the ever-increasing demands upon the welfare system.

Studies report a higher incidence of teenage pregnancy, delinquency, criminal activity and drug-related arrests for dropouts—as compared to the high school graduates.

Chairman CHILES. The question is: Which comes first—the cart or the horse?

We know that the ones who are dropping out are the ones who are having the problems, so it is all part of what we are dealing with here.

Mr. WAHL. In Florida, the cost of maintaining a student in a dropout prevention program is estimated to be between \$2,000 and \$4,000 annually.

Keeping that same student in a juvenile detention hall or jail would cost between \$22,000 and \$37,000 annually.

Perhaps the greatest cost of the dropout problem is the wasted human potential.

Failure to break into the job market between the ages of 16 and 24 is the key factor to chronic poverty; however, unfortunately, the public is not aware of the severity of the dropout problem in this country, so those of us who are knowledgeable must work to inform the public, to build a consensus to battle this problem and to challenge those segments of our society that have the power and the resources necessary to address the problem and to get those segments to act, and to act soon.

DROPOUT PROBLEM IMMENSELY COMPLEX

Here in our community, where we are fortunate to have a public school system that has had the ability and the resiliency to deal effectively with an array of unique situations, the dropout problem has reached grave proportions.

We are indeed fortunate to have as the newly selected superintendent of schools someone who recognizes the severity of the problem, and who has included dropout prevention as one of the top priorities of his new administration, and we support his efforts.

Senator, I have only recently become involved in working to combat dropout problems; however, I quickly observed that the problem is one of immense complexity, and its pervasiveness is shocking.

No simple solutions will be found.

In calling for action, we must mobilize all sectors of the community at large, and, to the business community in particular, we must say: "Wake up; there is a time bomb in your midst."

Attending meetings and offering lipservice to solutions will not be the answer.

We must all roll up our sleeves and commit the time, energy and resources needed to win this battle.

Citicorp Savings wholeheartedly supports your efforts, Senator Chiles, to bring the dropout problem to national attention and to initiate Federal legislation to address this serious issue.

We join you in urging your fellow Senators to pay now by supporting funding for dropout prevention programs, for we will have to pay a far greater price at a later date.

By investing in our youth now, we are investing in our collective futures.

Chairman CHILES. Thank you very much, sir.

Now, for the last witness on this panel, we have Mr. Guarione M. Diaz, who is the executive director of the Cuban-American National Training Council.

I know that you have been very active in promoting education programs for minority students, and I think you are going to focus for us on the special problems faced by Hispanic students in the school system and the high Hispanic dropout rates.

**STATEMENT OF GUARIONE M. DIAZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CUBAN-AMERICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL**

Mr. DIAZ. Good morning, Senator, and thank you very much for inviting us to this hearing, and, on behalf of the Cuban-American National Council, I would like to commend you for taking the initiative of having this hearing, and certainly to convey to you our full support not only in this initiative but in any future initiative that you take in facing this crisis.

My remarks will underscore that precise point—that we face nothing short of a national crisis in the United States—and, in doing so, would like to refer to not only dropouts but to illiteracy in general.

UNDEREDUCATION OF HISPANICS SERIOUS PROBLEM

The undereducation of Hispanics is the acute manifestation of a serious problem in our overall educational and social systems.

For instance, 7 million Hispanics 16 years old and above are functionally illiterate.

Less than one-half of all Hispanics 25 years old and above complete high school, and 14 percent of this group does not possess a fifth-grade education.

One out of every three 18-year-old Americans does not complete high school, and one out of every five is functionally illiterate.

Finally, one-third of all Hispanic high school graduates have D or F averages in core academic subjects.

To briefly refer to Dade County—about which you all have already heard—between 1960 and 1980, which is a period of 20 years, the Hispanic dropout rate increased sixfold.

As we approach the 1990s, Americans must realize that we have a major crisis in education.

SOME SOLUTIONS TO EDUCATION CRISIS

Solutions for this crisis must be akin to the 21st century and include, at a minimum, the following:

One: A national commitment to eradicate illiteracy—one that brings down the barriers which prevent certain classes of youngsters from reading, writing and performing elementary calculations.

Two: An upgrading of the status, working conditions and training of our teachers, who are the lowest paid of any industrialized nation.

We must achieve this if we expect to have as many as 1 million more teachers who will be needed before the turn of the century.

Three: A view of education as an integrated process where parents, schools and community groups play complimentary roles in the effort to reduce illiteracy.

Four: A new perspective which emphasizes the universal nature and unlimited potential of education.

Dade County has certainly been part of these national problems in education.

We are fortunate—as has been mentioned—to be tackling educational problems here in Dade County, understanding that there is no single solution and that many solutions must be put into place

at the same time, and, most of all, by making a commitment to eradicate illiteracy and dropouts in Dade County at the highest possible levels.

We, as a nation cannot afford to tell a few of our children to conquer space and to compete in international markets, and then tell the rest of our students that good Americans should master one language alone, and that not all children are equipped by God to succeed in school, or to understand or believe in our system, let alone those of other countries.

I do not know what these actions will cost, but Congress can tell us the huge cost that corporate America, and taxpayers in general, will bear if we continue treating our education system like business as usual.

Under-education affects minorities most of all, but this crisis also affects the well-being of every American and the balance among our social institutions and resources.

If not for ourselves, let us move now for the sake of all American children.

Chairman CHILES. Thank you very much.

Victoria, you mentioned in your testimony the need to have parental involvement—involvement by Hispanic parents.

I think we need to have that in all areas, but: What do you see as the most significant impediments that prevent parental involvement, and what suggestions can you make that we might consider?

LANGUAGE BARRIER IMPEDES COMMUNICATION

You know, I always hear about and recognize the strong family ties in the Hispanic family, and we envy that attribute all the time because it seems to be something that we have gotten away from—especially the younger generations.

What are the impediments that are out there?

Ms. HERNANDEZ. Well, Senator, I think there is a language situation that does impede communication as to what is available in the school system for the children, and, you know, we are all very familiar with the fact that schools may call PTA meetings, or whatever to try to get the parents involved, but the Hispanic parents will—

Well, some will show up, but, you know, there is a language barrier, and they feel intimidated by the bureaucracy, and I think that part of what I also mentioned was the need to have those bridges between the schools and the community groups and social agencies in which parents feel more comfortable, and that perhaps through a network in which communicants are involved, we can reach more Hispanic parents.

Certainly, I know that there is legislation pending that would require more language classes for adults, in particular, and literacy classes, et cetera, and, to the degree that this can be implemented in any of the communities, I think that will also help Hispanic parents feel more comfortable in dealing with the English language, but I do not want to place the burden or the problem on the Hispanic parents.

I think the problem is that we have to find ways in which to reach those parents, and I feel that working with community

groups is a part of the solution, and, also, I think that we have to—as a nation, and to the degree that it is spread throughout other kinds of concerns—recognize that we also need to speak the language of the parents.

Aspira, which is my organization, is working with several other Hispanic organizations to try to hold a parents' fair, which would be conducted in Spanish, and where we could bring in people who are experts in their fields—teenage depression, drugs and youth gang activities—and really talk to the parents about the symptoms out there, and how to recognize catch words in English if their kids are talking about crack, or whatever, and we are including very importantly the school system, and having the opportunity for the school system to really explain what resources they have.

There are resources in the school system that the parents really do not know exist—as well as resources in the community—so we really need get to them, and a part of that forum that we are planning the private sector is also sponsoring, so we are really talking about bridges.

I think that is the key to getting parents involved.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT KEY FACTOR IN DROPOUT RATE

Chairman CHILES. There was an interesting development in our hearing yesterday in Jacksonville.

We were told up there that the dropout rate with the black students up there is considerably lower than that of the white students, which is contrary to our national statistics, and it is certainly against our Florida averages.

I asked about it, and it seems that they have a very strong community involvement up there—within the churches and all—and they really go after these young people, and they get behind them, so to speak, and it seems that it has really worked up there, because, as I say, you can see the numbers in which the black students are doing considerably better than the white students.

T., you stressed the need for community involvement.

Mr. FAIR. There is no question about it, and, in our judgment, one of the key factors is clearly strong community support, and I have a little piece here that came out in my hometown newspaper—Winston-Salem, NC—and it reads that the dropout rate is 3.7 percent for both Afro-American and white students, and the reason for that—or one of the reasons—is strong community support of education in that community.

Where there is an appreciation of the value of education, people get excited about going to school, and the parents of the students get excited about going to school, and the students get excited about being in school, and the dropout rate drops accordingly.

Chairman CHILES. I thank you all very much for your testimony, and I think you have given us, Mr. Wahl, from the business standpoint, a pretty good idea of what we need to do, and, certainly, Mr. Diaz, you have pointed out that this is a problem that we cannot afford to let get any worse, and, in fact, we have got to deal with it.

[Recess.]

Chairman CHILES. We will now reconvene and go into our fourth panel, and we are going to ask Mr. Pat Tornillo, who is the execu-

tive vice president of the United Teachers of Dade County; Dr. Joseph A. Fernandez, superintendent of our Dade County Public Schools, and Mr. Roger C. Cuevas, assistant superintendent and head of the project: Students at Risk, if they will please come forward.

We will start with Mr. Tornillo.

Pat, we will start off with you.

STATEMENT OF PAT TORNILLO, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, UNITED TEACHERS OF DADE COUNTY, FL

Mr. TORNILLO. Thank you, Senator, for the opportunity of speaking here on this vitally important issue.

LEGISLATIVE IMPEDIMENTS TO DROPOUT PREVENTION

I would just like to say that I concur with much of what you have heard in the testimony that has been given here today, but I would like to address what has not been addressed here today—something that I call the institutional agency or legislative impediments to effective dropout prevention.

RIGID GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

First: These are examples. I am sure that they exist in other States across the country, but I am going to use Florida as the example.

At the same time that the Florida legislature passed the dropout prevention act—which we are all very grateful for, and which was passed in this last session—it mandated rigid graduation requirements geared to college-bound students.

This has—and will—force thousands of disadvantaged high school students to drop out, and that does not make sense.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND SUSPENSIONS

Second: Corporal punishment and suspensions contribute to students dropping out of school.

It does not make sense when we encourage students to drop out with the left hand and want them back with the right hand.

We need funds and resources to implement effective alternatives to corporal punishment and suspensions in our schools.

Forty-one States still allow corporal punishment.

All school districts in the United States still allow outdoor suspensions.

What we are trying to do here in Dade County has never been done and has never been tried in any school district—not to my knowledge—anywhere.

The Teachers' Union, the school board and the superintendent have all agreed that we are going to try to effectively eliminate corporal punishment and outdoor suspensions.

We are going to try to do that jointly.

We have got a task force set up, and we plan to provide alternatives for those students in terms of at least that piece of it not being what I call an institutional impediment.

We do not know if we are going to be successful, but we do know that it is going to take more than just saying that we are going to abolish those two things.

In a recent column in the Chicago Tribune by Joan Beck, it said: "It is very simple. All you need to do is abolish corporal punishment. It does not cost any money."

We know better; it does cost money, because the alternatives to eliminating those two things are effective programs designed to keep students in school.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Third: This is what I would consider a legislative impediment.

You have heard Tom Petersen testify here today.

In my opinion—and in the opinion of the researchers—the most effective dropout prevention is early intervention, yet policywise legislatures fail to make early childhood education a part of the K-12 program, nor are the funds provided for these programs, and that does not make sense.

You can go to almost every State, and the only State that I know of that is actively implementing it as part of the K-12 program is South Carolina.

That came out of a National Governors' Association.

That was former Governor Riley's—of South Carolina—main project, and he did get it through the legislature, and there are State funds being provided for early childhood intervention.

LACK OF EFFECTIVE EDUCATION/BUSINESS COALITION

The fourth is the lack of effective education-business coalition and relationship.

I was pleased to hear from Citicorp here today that business needs to wake up, because I think that in the past they have ignored the school system.

They have not given us their expertise, their interest and their commitment, and that is beginning to change.

We cannot just have business sitting on the outside, complaining about what we do not do, because they have to come in and collaboratively work with us.

TEACHERS NEED MORE TIME

Now, in conclusion, I would like to recommend to you that we need to seek more input from those on the inside—the classroom teachers—and to give the classroom teachers the freedom and time to care.

I heard that in testimony here today and I can tell you this: If you will look at the North Carolina business study of a teacher's day, there is very little time in that day for teachers to care and to actually sit down with students.

We try to do this with counselors.

I have always had kind of a radical proposal, which is that you could multiply the number of counselors in the schools by two point two million—that classroom teachers are counselors, and that they are at times the best, because they have the direct contact with the students in the classroom.

Unfortunately, they do not have the time to give that kind of attention, so that would require a restructuring, and we are trying to do some of that in Dade County, and I just want you to know that—with the teachers' union, the superintendent of schools and the school board, collaboratively—we have got some exciting experiments going in which we are saying to teachers and principals: "You tell us what you need to do to operate, to structure and to run the school," and, Senator, what we are also saying to them is: "Washington should not be telling you; Tallahassee should not be telling you; the Dade County School Board should not be telling you; the teachers' union should not be telling you. You, in the school—the faculty and the principal—ought to be making those kinds of decisions, because you know best about what students need.

STUDENTS MUST BE EDUCATED

I think we need to say to students—and this does relate to the attempt on our part to provide an alternative to corporal punishment and outdoor suspensions—is: "You no longer have a free ride. We care about you, and you are not going to be suspended, and you are not going to be put out on the street. You are going to be educated—maybe not in this classroom if you are disruptive—even if it is in a store-front. Somewhere, in some program, you are going to be educated. We are not going to put you out of school. We are not going to put you out on the street," but we cannot have programs without money.

Parents must be made more responsible for the education of their children, and you heard something about that here today.

Teachers, without any question, must be given the authority to exclude disruptive students from their classrooms and the students—those students—must be provided alternative education programs, and not be kicked out of school.

Those kinds of institutional impediments can be corrected, and it is not just a question of all the dropout prevention programs, and those are the things that sometimes prevent us from doing all of the things that need to be done.

Chairman CHILES. I think you are exactly right, and I thank you.

Roger, we will hear from you now as the head of Project: Students at Risk.

I have read your statement, so, if you will just try to brief us, I will have a couple of minutes to ask some questions.

STATEMENT OF ROGER C. CUEVAS, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, PROJECT: STUDENT AT RISK

Mr. CUEVAS. I am sure that you have my testimony so I will not go over it, but I will mention certain things.

This panel is: "The Schools—What Can Be Done?"

Well, something has been done—something significant.

PROGRAM COMBINES FOUR PROBLEM AREAS

The program—"Project: Students at Risk"—did not exist 2 months ago, and, under the endorsement of our school board and the leadership of Dr. Fernandez, the dropout, drug abuse, suicide

and teen pregnancy prevention were combined into one program: Students at Risk.

I would like to quickly move through the four programs that were brought together.

In the area of drug abuse—and I am going from K through 12—the curriculum is in place, and, additionally, we are in the process of implementing Project Trust, which is a drug abuse, substance and counseling program.

In addition to that, we are in the process of developing an instructional program in the mental health area to deal effectively with teenage depression.

Our sex education program is ongoing from K through 12, and we have a fine program at our COPE Centers for our pregnant students.

These centers serve our pregnant students in a caring atmosphere that is comfortable for them, and not only do they receive academics, but parenting and academic training as well.

In the dropout area, I have got to mention two programs:

One is the Vocational Interdisciplinary Program—the VIP Program—that is housed at Robert Morgan, and it is one of the exemplary programs in the State of Florida.

This program is housed at the Robert Morgan Vocational Technical Center, and it serves 109 teenage potential dropouts from feeder schools in the south and south-central Dade County areas.

Students receive instructions in academics and vocational subjects, and they develop employability skills and participate in a work-study program.

A similar program is planned for the Miami Lakes Technical Institute, which covers the north and north-central areas of the county.

The second program that I would like to mention is the Work Experience Program, which is a proven method of retaining students, and our Work Experience Program is one of the best in the country, and we are in the process of expanding the scope of its service area to adult vocational programs.

This effort is being implemented through dropouts who are back into an educational setting.

The next thing that I would like to mention is public awareness, and an aggressive public awareness campaign is in the process of being implemented.

The priority of this administration is making the public aware of all the informational programs for students at risk.

At this time I would like to thank all of the news media for how they have cooperated—the television and the newspapers—in making this so.

MAJOR STEPS TAKEN TO DEAL WITH DROPOUT PROBLEM

The main point on which I would like to conclude this is that the Dade County Public Schools has taken a major step to deal effectively with the dropout problem.

For the first time, a school system has recognized the interrelatedness of sex, drugs, suicide, teen pregnancy, and dropouts.

In addition to this system's efforts, we continue to work closely with community agencies and local law enforcement groups—particularly as they relate to gang issues and community concerns.

I thank you for this opportunity, and I hope that we will get the needed money. [Laughter and applause.]

Chairman CHILES. We thank you very much, sir.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cuevas follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROGER C. CUEVAS

Dr. Fernandez has told you of the Dade County Public Schools' commitment to attack head-on, the dropout problem. In the next few moments, I want to share with you in more detail the components of some of the programs to which Dr. Fernandez alluded.

I am the Assistant Superintendent of Project: Students At Risk. That is significant since that program didn't exist two months ago. Dr. Fernandez has combined the existing programs for dropouts, drug abuse, suicide, and teen pregnancy into a comprehensive approach.

In the area of drug abuse, an ongoing K-12 curriculum is in place. Additionally, there is a Project Trust Counselor in each middle/junior high school to do among other things, the following:

1. Implement a developmental counseling program for all entry level middle/junior high school students utilizing an affective education curriculum.
2. Conduct individual and group counseling sessions with "at risk" students in regard to the prevention and intervention of drug abuse and other self-defeating and destructive behaviors.
3. Conduct an evening intervention center as an alternative to suspension and/or for students who are exhibiting behavioral problems.

4. Develop and maintain a close working relationship with parents/guardians, church groups, social service agencies, and community centers. This will include periodic home visits, family counseling, parent training, and workshops on substance education for parents/guardians.
5. Develop and implement self-help groups (peer counseling) in order to encourage and promote peer leadership experiences for students who have been self-referred or referred by school personnel, parents/guardians.
6. Assist administrators and other student services personnel in the handling of drug-involved youth as well as those exhibiting other types of dysfunctional behavior.
7. Develop and implement sessions which will utilize community agencies and drug-free former addicts as resource personnel to work with students involved in the program.
8. Develop and implement inservice training programs for school personnel in order to provide them with identification and prevention approaches.
9. Assist the feeder elementary schools in establishing "JUST SAY NO" clubs and in participating in other special substance abuse prevention activities, e.g., "JUST SAY NO" walk, the substance education poster and essay contests.

We are in the process of developing an instructional program in the mental health area to deal effectively with teenage depression.

Our sex education program is ongoing from K-12 and we have a fine program at our COPE Centers for our pregnant students.

In the area of dropout prevention, we have developed programs such as:

1. The Career Awareness Laboratory Program. A "hands-on" experience in a simulated world of work setting. The purpose of the program is to develop a strong sense of responsibility, self-confidence, and self-esteem as it focuses on student success. It is designed to motivate the unmotivated, disinterested, and unsuccessful student who could become a potential dropout. This program focuses on the teaching of employability skills and career awareness activities in a laboratory setting.
2. The Occupational/Placement Specialist Program serves potential dropout students in all grades in all grades at the secondary school level. Students are provided services individually and in groups in identifying, exploring, and working toward a realistic career goal. In addition, students are provided assistance, information, and experience which will enable them to examine and intelligently select a career area appropriate to their abilities and interests, and further aid them in being appropriately placed in a career area of their choice. Students who leave school before graduation are given an

exit interview for the purpose of providing follow-up services and "tracking" of the student once he/she leaves school.

3. Miami's for My Child and Me is a program that serves students in grades K-6. The purpose of the program is to provide training to parents utilizing home study activities that will enrich their children's educational experiences.
4. The Vocational Interdisciplinary Program (VIP) housed at the Robert Morgan Vocational Technical Center serves 109 tenth grade potential dropouts from feeder schools in the South and South Central areas. Students receive instruction in academics and vocational subjects, develop employability skills, and participate in a work/study program. A similar program is planned for Miami Lakes Technical Institute which covers the North and North Central areas of the county.
5. There are two COPE Centers to serve our pregnant students in an atmosphere that is comfortable for them. They not only receive the usual academics, but parenting training as well.
6. A joint Dade County Public Schools/Private Industry Council/South Florida Employment and Training Consortium (PIC) Program called "CITIES IN SCHOOLS." This is a nationwide dropout prevention program in which students receive extensive counseling and assistance from outstationed social service agency personnel who are housed in trailers provided at each school. The program had been implemented in three senior high schools, and for the 1987-88 school year will be expanded to ten additional schools.

The main point that I would like to make is that Dade County Public Schools has taken a major step to deal effectively with the dropout problem. For the first time, a school system has recognized the inter-relatedness of sex, drugs, suicide, teen pregnancy, and dropouts and decompartmentalized these areas. In addition, to this system's program efforts, we continue to work closely with community agencies and local law enforcement groups, particularly as they relate to gang issues and community concerns.

Chairman CHILES. We will next hear from Dr. Fernandez.

DROPOUT PREVENTION WEEK

Dr. Fernandez, we know that part of this is happening in Dade County because of the attention that you have placed upon it and the priority that you have placed upon it, and I congratulate you on that and I am delighted to see the attention that you and the School Board have placed on this, and I want to say—because I did not say it at the outset—that I could not be more pleased with what Commissioner Castor is doing and the priority that she has placed on the program.

We held a joint press conference 2 days ago.

At her instigation the Florida Cabinet passed a resolution making this Dropout Prevention Week during this week, and listening to her education compact and what she is talking about, and trying to get at least 5,000 students signed up within the next 3 years, in which they will have a job and a sponsor as long as they are staying in school—

Those are the kinds of efforts that show the kind of leadership that—

Senator CHILES. We are focusing on that, and we are delighted to see that kind of leadership.

We are running short on time here, so, if you will be as brief as you can, I might have time to ask a question or two.

STATEMENT OF DR. JOSEPH A. FERNANDEZ, SUPERINTENDENT, DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. FERNANDEZ. I recognize that we are short on time, and I know that you have our prepared statements that will be included in the record, so I will just elaborate on a few of the things that I think I should point out.

We do have a serious dropout problem, obviously, and the message that we have been trying to send out is that—if we have one dropout—it is one too many and a terrible waste of human resources.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS ARE BEST

We recognize that some of the early intervention programs are probably the best ways of getting at these students early on.

The research indicates that, and you have heard Mr. Petersen speak to that issue.

Unfortunately, the funding does not appropriately help us in that area, because we have to do that primarily out of funds from our local sources and at the expense of some other programs.

We can almost tell you—by the development of the profiles that we have done on students—who the potential at-risk students are, and we can also tell you by the time they are in the first or second grade, so it is very important, we think, that we get at those students early—very, very early.

Unfortunately, we cannot get to the students who are already in the middle schools and senior high schools, and some of the things that we have seen that seem to work the best are some of the

things that some of the other people have previously testified to—teachers as mentors or counselors as mentors.

That seems to be one of the most effective programs.

The students that we have heard speak——

The ones where it seemed to work were where they had a teacher or a counselor or someone in the school that they could go to and speak to and who really cared about them.

We have had some experiences in our schools with some of those kinds of programs, and they seemed to be very, very useful, and they seemed to get at the core of the problem—particularly in the area of alienation.

What we are trying to do here in Dade County in terms of grouping all of these things together under one department——

We think our Project: Students at Risk is going to go a long way in addressing the issue, because, as you know, it is a very complex problem and there is no one answer, and we have discussed this over and over again, trying to come to a solution, and we recognize that, while we have some programs that are working and some that are not, probably nationally, across the country, there are probably programs that are working in other places that——

CLEAR EVALUATIONS NEEDED

I am a firm believer—as you heard in the testimony from the University of Miami—that we need clear evaluations to tell us what is working.

Chairman CHILES. I am hoping that some of the Federal legislation that we get passed will help us to get to identify the programs that do work—whether they are in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, or in Dade County, Florida—and for us to then focus on them.

I think that is part of the thing that the Federal Government can do—to try to assist in that way—and to try to get some of the States to become involved in this problem.

I am delighted to see that Florida is not waiting on the bill, so to speak, and, thank goodness, Florida has already recognized this terrible problem that we have in our State, but there are some States that have not even yet recognized it.

Dr. FERNANDEZ. The other thing that we have to do—and think we are guilty of it in public education, nationally, but not necessarily here in Florida—is to stop getting into these turf battles.

Chairman CHILES. I want to compliment you on that—just on this panel here, where we see the representative of the Teachers' Union and you singing out of the same hymn book.

Dr. FERNANDEZ. Yes, but he did take some of my time, and I would like to point that out. [Laughter.]

Chairman CHILES. He always does that. [Laughter.]

Dr. FERNANDEZ. I would like to congratulate you on your Senate Bill 1078.

I think that is the kind of thing we need—particularly with the inference in there that it is going to be left at the local level, rather than at the Federal or State level.

We all have to do this together; our school system cannot do it alone; we cannot do it without the community, the business community, the CBOs, the parents, and, certainly, we cannot do it

without the teachers, but we do need assistance from the Federal Government.

SOLUTION LIES IN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Chairman CHILES. I think that is very true, and I think that we have to have involvement at the Federal, State, and local levels, but I reiterate what I said at the start: We are not going to solve this one from Washington or from Tallahassee; it is going to have to be solved right here in this community if it is ever going to be solved, and it is going to have to be solved in every other community around the State and Nation, and it is going to take a tremendous amount of community involvement, and that is one of the things that we lost as we had to go to the larger schools, and certainly Florida is on the firing line with our percentage of students—the tremendous numbers—and we know that it is going to increase, but it is a challenge that I know that we are up to, and I want to reiterate again that this is not the hearing that sort of ends everything.

I would like to come back and hold a forum here.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Fernandez follows:]

Thank your Dr. Fernandez.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. JOSEPH A. FERNANDEZ

In 1984, concerned citizens of Dade County, Florida, charged the grand jury with investigating the high school dropout and the inner city school. This investigation was done with the full support of the Dade County Public School System and was so noted in their report.

The final report of the grant jury, July, 1984, reflected that 15 to 20 percent of the students in Dade County public schools were dropouts. Reasons for these students dropping out of school were academic failure, school and social isolation, and lack of support for academic achievement on the part of parents and peers. Six out of ten of the dropouts interviewed were unemployed and not enrolled in any vocational or academic program.

This information and other information received, served the school system in designing preventative strategies to reduce the dropout rate as well as to review the academic areas in need of improvement.

One of the most effective preventative strategies was the establishment of an advisory council, composed of representatives from business, industry, community and Dade County public school to concentrate on ways to keep children in school. This council has worked diligently to bring about recommendations which have enhanced the Dade County public schools' dropout prevention efforts.

Another effective strategy was the development and utilization of the potential dropout profile for students, which is currently being used in all Dade County public schools to identify, intervene, and prevent "students at risk" from dropping out of school.

Although dropout prevention has been and is a major goal of the school system, it has been difficult to make a truly major impact on the problem for two specific reasons:

1. As Senator Lawton Chiles has pointed out, Dade County is composed of diverse populations, White Americans, black Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Haitian-Americans, migrants, and immigrants from many countries. Many of these new Americans and immigrants seeking freedom and opportunity, must often overcome both language and cultural barriers to succeed in school.

2. Lack of funding for dropout prevention efforts has seriously hindered a more effective and comprehensive approach to this crisis. While new projects and programs may be criticized as too costly, as the old expression goes, "we can pay now or pay later."

Although funding has been limited, there are some programs that are making a significant impact.

Identification, prevention and intervention are the key words of the dropout prevention efforts of our school system. Through our basic skills, chapter 1, compensa-

tory education, migrant, and follow through programs, all described in greater detail in the overview of dropout prevention programs, Dade County public schools is constantly and consistently striving to bring all students up to grade level.

Another program, dropout prevention rebate, rewards schools for their individual efforts to keep students in school. It is the major effort of the school system to reduce the dropout rate at the secondary school level. Utilizing the potential dropout profile, each secondary school has targeted 100 potential dropouts for intensive services that will be determined by each school. A rebate of \$50 per student is given to the schools for each student who remains in school until the end of the school year and demonstrates improvement in other criteria, that is, attendance, academic grades, and behavior.

In addition to working on basic skills and individual school efforts, Dade County public schools has drastically increased guidance services, providing an elementary counselor in every elementary school and a group or trust counselor in every middle, junior, and senior high school, in addition to the schools regular allocation of counselors, to provide individual and group counseling to "at risk" students at all levels.

To assist teachers, and to set clear, consistent limits and consequences for all of Dade County's youngsters, and to provide uniform "followthrough by the teachers, and to offer all students warmth, support, and rewards for appropriate behavior, Dade County public schools has instituted for the third year, an assertive discipline classroom management program. This program has consistently drawn high marks from teachers, students, counselors, and administrators.

Since it is a known fact that students with defined educational goals will remain in school, great effort is expanded in the area of career development, beginning with "hands-on" experiences in elementary school through post secondary high school planning and extending into the adult/vocational technical schools.

There are 18 pilot dropout programs operated solely by Dade County public schools or in cooperation with other community-based agencies. For example, the HIPPPY program (home instruction for program for preschool youngsters). This program has served preschool children ages 4-5, over a 2-year period in four innercity schools in the district. The program is designed to teach parents how to instruct their child at home. The basic purpose of the program is to involve the parent in an educational activity with the child at home, and to assure success in the activity for both parent and child. There are three major areas of intellectual functioning—formal language, sensory discrimination, and problem solving.

One of the most promising pilot programs is the PIC Program (private industry council/south Florida employment and training consortium). This program serves at present 1,290 "high-risk" potential dropouts in 13 high schools, providing a multi-year sequence of training and employment opportunities, including employability skills training; guaranteed summer jobs each year, if students stay in school, and a full-time private sector job upon graduation; part-time jobs during the school year, if needed; remedial instruction, where appropriate; and extensive counseling through school system counselor/coordinators and outstationed social service agency counselors. An additional component for other graduating seniors provides employability skills training and placement into private sector jobs through vocational exploration and on-the-job training by a company that retains the graduates in its regular work force.

Several years ago, after tracking Dade County public school students from the eighth grade through the twelfth grade, the office of educational accountability published their findings, "A Study of the Longitudinal Dropout Rate Eighth Grade Cohort Followed From June 1980 Through February 1985."

- 30 percent of the 18,900 dropped out of school
- 34 percent of the black students dropped out
- 30 percent of the Hispanic students dropped out
- 26 percent of the white students dropped out

If we convert the statistics to individual students, we see youngsters with an increased likelihood of going to jail, becoming pregnant, or becoming drug abusers. Youngsters with increased mental health problems who are depressed or suicidal.

We have to recognize that because of a student's poor academic performance, lack of interest, alienation, poor self-concept, or who has parents who are drop outs and/or illiterate, that there are unequal needs that require unequal dollars. If we as a community and a Federal Government, do not deal with the dropout issue head on, we are contributing to the creation of a permanent underclass society. That is a contribution I am sure that none of us wants to make, and one that is definitely not tax deductible. Quite the contrary.

To deal with these major problems and to focus on solutions, project: students at risk was created. This project assists all areas, offices, and disciplines to eradicate dropouts, drugs, suicide and teen pregnancy in the Dade County Public School System.

Dade County public schools has taken the initiative in dealing with the problem of dropouts and its related issues. We welcome your programs at the Federal level and stand ready and willing to work with and support your efforts. I commend you and your colleagues for taking the initiative to deal with a problem that is plaguing our society.

Chairman CHILES. I know that there are a number of people who are here today involved with innovative programs that they want to talk about, and I want to hear about them, but our time constraint does not allow me to do that today. I will be back and try to have some kind of forum, and, again, I want to thank you for the use of your very fine facilities here.

We are going to have to recess our hearing now, but, again, I especially thank our young people.

I could have spent a couple of days listening to them and learning from them, and I think all of us could have.

We thank you all very much, and the hearing is now recessed.
[Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the hearing was recessed.]

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